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AUBREY:

A NOVEL.

VOL. IV.

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AUBREY:

A NOVEL.

By R. C. DALLAS, Esq.

AUTHOR OF PERCIVAL.

Sweet are the uses of Adversity. SHAKSPEARE.

That misery does not make all virtuous, experience too clearly informs us; but it is no less certain that, of what virtue there is, misery produces the far greater part. JOHNSON.

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CONTENTS

OF

THE FOURTH VOLUME.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Charles Senſitive. Emily's Choice of a Confidante. The Beauty and Bleſſing of Candour. Time agreeably ſpent. The unexpected Fate of Jacob's Wife, and the Place where ſhe hangs, - - - Page 1

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

The Pain of Concealment. Arthur and Edmund's ſingular Adventure at a retired Cottage. The Pleaſure of Freedom from Diſguiſe. The Friends in Chace of a Beauty. Sequel of their Adventure, - - - 16

CHAPTER XXXIX.

True Love not eaſily ſubdued. The Nature of it. Difficult to be kept a Secret. A Scheme of Pleaſure, - - - 50

CHAP.

CHAPTER XL.

A Visit to Sudley-Castle. Edmund loses his Way and achieves an heroic Deed. Arthur's Reception at Melford, - Page 68

CHAPTER XLI.

Mariton. Aubrey's first Expences. The Apparitions of the Castle seen at the Parsonage. Hue and Cry after them. Emily receives Proposals of Marriage from two of her Lovers. Her Conversation with Aubrey, 87

CHAPTER XLII.

A Breakfast at Spicer-Hall. Another on the same Day at the Parsonage. Emily's successful Study of Self-command. She argues with herself in Favour of Mr. Rowley. Result of her Argument. Sensitive appears in a new Light, - - - 111

CHAPTER XLIII.

Melford. Arthur no Flint. Opens his Heart to Edmund, and leaves Edenbower. Suspicion as to the two Men who attacked Lord Sudley. Arthur arrives at Mariton. Conversation with

with Aubrey. Time helped forward Death of the Rector of Mariton, - Page 133

CHAPTER XLIV.

Dr. Searle's Will. State of Aubrey's Finances. Arthur's Choice of a Profession. A Letter from Sensitive. Presentation of the Rectory. Family Affection. Arrival of Sensitive. The Aubreys confirmed at the Parsonage, 161

CHAPTER XLV.

Sensibility. Alteration at the Parsonage. Extraordinary Apparition at Leicester. Mr. Cowper's Adventure at Okeham. Arrival at Mariton. Resolution respecting Smyth. The Ghosts of the Castle, - - 192

CHAPTER XLVI.

Mr. Cowper gives a Reason for leaving Mariton. Hints a Change to Aubrey. State of Sensitive's Affairs. His Determination respecting Arthurina. Progress of Misfortune. New Retrenchment. Revolution among the Maids. Unexpected Offer. Conduct of the Cambridges. Duns. Love and Poverty, 233

CHAP.

CHAPTER XL VII.

Determination respecting Arthur. Household Affairs. One of the Consequences of Debt. Self-Reproach. Cause of Arthur's Voyage being postponed, - - - Page 259

CHAPTER XLVIII.

Melford. Conversation between Mr. Cowper and Edmund. Unexpected Result of it. The Power of Fancy. Mariton Parsonage, 273

CHAPTER XLIX.

Edmund's bold Address. Letters from Melford. A Meeting of Creditors. Arrival of a Stranger. Result of the Meeting of Creditors. Aubrey arrested. Time of Removal from Mariton determined, - - 303

CHAPTER L.

Being the longest, as well as the last, the Contents of which, it would be Impolicy to prefix, 328

AU-

AUBREY.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Charles Senſitive. Emily's Choice of a Confidante. The Beauty and Bleſſing of Candour. Time agreeably ſpent. The unexpected Fate of Jacob's Wife, and the Place where ſhe hangs.

THE company of Senſitive contributed to diſſipate the gloom that had begun to prevail at the parſonage, and which would otherwiſe have increaſed on the departure of the lads. Charles's diſpoſition was not of that lively character that perpetually ſeeks and promotes an inceſſant flow of gaiety, and if it fail of intenſe-

neſs, ſinks into *ennui*; but was mildly and uniformly cheerful. He was neither loquacious nor taciturn: he ſeldom laughed, but very often ſmiled. He was not fond of admiration, but was charmed with affection. His chief objects were to give pleaſure, and to prevent pain. When his drawings or paintings were praiſed, it gave him a lively ſenſation, but produced not a ſingle ſpark of vanity; his emotion was delight on creating delight. His heart was the ſoil of the ſocial paſſions: if ever there was one completely devoid of the ſelfiſh principle, it was Charles Senſitive's. In diſpelling the gloom gathering when he arrived, he had no aid from mirth: an even tenour of friendly talk, enjoyment of muſic, admiration of the ſcenes around Mariton, the diſplay of his portfolios, in which there was ever ſomething new to be found, and the ſketches he made

of

of the ſtriking points that preſented themſelves in his walks, engaged and gratified his friends, and Arthurina very ſoon recovered that ſprightlineſs that diffuſed a ſpirit of gaiety wherever ſhe was.

Emily continued to think of Edmund: ſhe was convinced that he loved her, but he had not ſaid a word to entitle her to conſider him as her lover. Her own feelings, however, were not in a ſettled ſtate; ſhe was afraid to truſt her heart to her own management, and ſhe reſolved to lay it open to her mother. Accordingly ſhe took an opportunity when Arthurina was copying a landſcape, under the direction of Senſitive, to ſtroll round the garden with Mrs. Aubrey, with whom, when they got near the ſummer-houſe, ſhe entered into the following converſation: "Mamma! did any thing "uncommon ſtrike you in Edmund's "manner?"—"No, my dear Emily,

" nothing. Did any thing ſtrike you?" Emily turned her head and looked in Mrs. Aubrey's face to ſee if ſhe expected what ſhe wiſhed to ſay—" You know," replied ſhe, " I always tell you what I " think, right or wrong. Edmund is " very amiable; is n't he, Mamma?"— " He is indeed, my love:" replied her mother. " I am afraid I am going to " be very fooliſh;" ſaid Emily, " but " pray don't laugh at me. I thought he " looked at me and behaved to me in a " way I never obſerved in any body be- " fore; and it ran ſo much in my mind, " that I could not be eaſy till I told you." —" My ſweet girl!" ſaid Mrs. Aubrey, " how charming is this frankneſs of " mind! how happy does it make me " to ſee the pure affection and friend- " ſhip I poſſeſs in your heart taking " ſtronger and ſtronger root. Let us " go into the ſummer-houſe and ſit " down—

"down—What you have said, and the "purity of your sentiments, call upon "me to be as ingenuous with you as "you are with me."

Having seated themselves, Mrs. Aubrey continued thus: "I need not tell "you, my dear Emily, that the first ob-"ject of my heart and of your father's is "the happiness of our children: you "observe it, my love, in all we do and "say. You are arrived at a period of "life when, if you are not put upon your "guard, you may be unexpectedly in-"volved in misery."—"My dear Mam-"ma," said Emily, "I know what you "mean, and I am upon my guard; in-"deed I am: and it is because I would "not be off my guard that I speak to you "now."—"You cannot but know," continued her mother, "that I allude to "the passion of love, and to marriage. "Love, like other passions, my dear

" Emily, is a ſource of happineſs or
" miſery, as it is ſwayed by good ſenſe
" or by folly. Nature, in prohibiting
" our ſex to court the other, fairly and
" kindly gives us time to call on our un-
" derſtanding to aſſiſt us in our conduct.
" Knowing that we are to wait to be ad-
" dreſſed, nature equally dictates the
" complete reſerve of our heart, till we
" are certain that we are the object of
" love. Few women, that are worthy
" of being loved, are inattentive to this
" dictate, and conſequently there are few
" who may not, if they pleaſe, weigh the
" conſequences of engaging their hearts
" before they yield to love. It is, how-
" ever, in ſome caſes not ſo eaſy as in
" others, which is the reaſon that ſo many
" imprudent matches are formed; for we
" are too much inclined to think we have
" ſufficiently complied with the law of
" our nature if we are not the firſt to
" love:

" love: but a girl, who is taught to con-
" ſult her reaſon in every action of her
" life, will not be prompt in yielding her
" heart to the firſt overtures of a paſſion
" which ſhe is aware is to make ſo im-
" portant a change in her ſituation, and
" to influence her whole life. Having
" learned that to render a marriage happy,
" virtue, good ſenſe, good humour, and
" a competent proviſion for a family are
" all as indiſpenſable as love; ſhe will
" aſcertain theſe foundations of happi-
" neſs before ſhe places her affections
" on any man; before ſhe encourages
" any lover. I am talking of ſuch a
" girl as my Emily. You have, I know,
" captivated Colonel Spicer; but you
" will, I am ſure, examine whether he
" poſſeſſes theſe indiſpenſable qualities
" or not."—" Dear Mamma!" cried
Emily, " it does not require a thought."
—" If it ſhould be likewiſe the caſe with

" Edmund, you would, I am confident, " no leſs attend to thoſe points."—" To " be ſure—" ſaid Emily—" but he is ſo " different from Col. Spicer! poor fel- " low! he only wants a fortune to——" Mrs. Aubrey perceiving the bias of Emily's mind, interrupted her ſpeech, and proceeded thus: " Without taking " any particular perſon into conſideration, " I will ſeize this occaſion, Emily, to tell " you freely my mind, and I know I ſpeak " your father's ſentiments. There can " be no doubt that a virtuous love, con- " firmed by a prudent marriage, is the " ſource of great felicity: but, as in the " caſe of other deſirable objects, we muſt " conſider well whether it be attainable " before we ſuffer ourſelves to deſire it; " for vain wiſhes are the marks of a " weak mind. There are ſeveral very " ſtrong reaſons that lead me to adviſe " you and Arthurina, as you grow older,

" to

" to regard marriage rather as a dan-
" gerous trial, than as a certain means of
" happineſs: in the firſt place, let a man
" be ever ſo worthy and amiable, it
" will not be ſufficient without compe-
" tence; in the next, if he be affluent,
" no affluence will be ſufficient without
" worth and amiable qualities; and in the
" third, which comes moſt home to your
" own caſe, where fortune is all on one
" ſide, a foundation is laid to embitter
" the marriage ſtate: I do not ſpeak
" from perſonal experience; there are
" few men with ſuch a heart as your
" father's. The loſs of his fortune has
" put it out of his power to portion you
" or your ſiſter—"—" Thank God!"
cried Emily, " nobody will court us for
" our fortunes."—" Whenever it ſhall
" pleaſe God that he ſhould ſucceed to
" the Rectory," continued Mrs. Aubrey,
" it is his intention to fund annually a

" part of his income for the purpoſe of
" making a proviſion for you and Ar-
" thurina; but, as he will have to eſta-
" bliſh your brother, and Arthur-Wil-
" liam, it is not to be ſuppoſed that any
" thing conſiderable can be collected for
" many years; therefore, my dear girl,
" I earneſtly adviſe you to conſider a
" happy marriage as out of the circle of
" the portion of felicity allotted to you in
" this world, and to continue your enjoy-
" ment of thoſe reſources Providence
" has mercifully reſerved for us."—
" Believe me, my dear Mamma," ſaid
Emily, " I would not leave you and
" Papa, to marry a king. I don't care
" at all about marriage; and, in ſpeak-
" ing to you about Edmund, I never
" thought of marriage; but I own to
" you I thought there was ſomething
" odd in his conduct to me: for, firſt he
" was ſo ſociable and ſo friendly with
" me,

" me, and looked me full in the face,
" whether in company or alone; but
" ſoon afterwards he never ſpoke to me,
" except in company; and when he
" looked at me, it was not in his uſual
" eaſy way. In ſhort, Mamma, it ſtruck
" me that he loved me, and you know
" whatever comes into my mind I al-
" ways aſk your opinion upon it. He
" does not know what my thoughts
" are, or that I am telling them to you,
" ſo that there is no harm."—" My dear
" Emily," ſaid Mrs. Aubrey, " your
" candour charms me. I ſhould not be
" ſurpriſed to find your obſervation true;
" but if it be, depend upon it that Ed-
" mund's good ſenſe will ſway him on
" the occaſion: he will examine his
" heart, he will perceive the error of
" indulging any affection for you but
" what he might feel for a ſiſter, and he
" will baniſh every other ſentiment. You

" know, from Mr. Cowper's hiſtory of
" himſelf, and the Smyths, that Edmund
" has no proſpect, but from his own in-
" duſtry; and that he has to aſſiſt his
" uncle in ſupporting his mother and ſiſ-
" ter."—" I knowit, Mamma; and I am
" ſure he has too good a heart to think
" of marrying: but I hope he will con-
" tinue to love me as a ſiſter, for I have a
" very great eſteem for him; and Arthur
" and Arthurina too have both the great-
" eſt eſteem for him."—" We all love
" him," ſaid Mrs. Aubrey, " and there
" can be no doubt that the friendſhip we
" have formed with him and his uncle
" will be laſting; but I am more and
" more convinced, from the freſh in-
" ſtance of candour my Emily has now
" given me, that ſhe will continue to
" examine all her thoughts, and guard
" her heart againſt any prepoſſeſſion that
" could poſſibly tend to embarraſs her

"way through life, and consequently to "afflict her family."—"Never, never," cried Emily, "never will I knowingly "give you any pain: and all the happi- "ness I desire in this world is to see you "and papa happy, and to pass the rest of "my life just as I have done since we "came to Mariton." Mrs. Aubrey here put an end to the subject by embracing Emily, and saying that she felt the blessing of having such a daughter. Emily was no less sensible of the blessing of such a mother; she felt delighted and easy in having opened her mind to her; and she was confirmed in the persuasion she had long cherished, that she was fortunate in the choice of such a confidante, who was equally removed from the harshness of arbitrary controul, and the weak complaisance of indiscriminate concurrence.

Mrs. Aubrey and Emily now continued their walk, and, after examining the

the flower-beds, returned to the ſitting-room, where they found Arthurina advancing in her work, Senſitive looking over her, and Aubrey reading at the ſame table. Arthurina had early diſcovered a turn for drawing; her eye was juſt, and the leſſons ſhe had taken from a maſter had drawn forth her taſte. Senſitive was delighted at the improvement he obſerved in her talent, and undertook to teach her to paint in oil. He alſo gave Arthur-William ſome leſſons in drawing, on finding he had a taſte for it. Time never hung leſs heavy upon their hands. Emily, having relieved her mind by her confidence in her mother, recovered her natural cheerfulneſs: the family viſited, and rambled as uſual. In their walks Senſitive ſupplied the place of Arthur, and, with the eye of an artiſt, caught and pointed out new beauties of picturesque ſcenery. The ſublimity of the caſtle was a favourite ſtudy with him, and he

ſketched

ſketched the various ſtriking views it preſented. The day after Arthur and Edmund left Mariton, Aubrey's celebrated Raphael arrived; and, by an unanimous vote, Jacob's wife was decreed to be hung over the chimney, in the ſitting-room. Senſitive, on finding that Aubrey was uneaſy under the circumſtance of the purchaſe, had given up the point: he had received and appropriated the money for Elton's check; and, having ſeen the Madona packed up before he left London, ordered it to be ſent after him to Mariton by the waggon. It was placed where it would be moſt ſeen, as a token of liberality and friendſhip. The painting itſelf was good, and Aubrey declared and felt that he now valued it a thouſand times more than if it were a real Raphael.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

The Pain of Concealment. Arthur and Edmund's ſingular Adventure at a retired Cottage. The Pleaſure of Freedom from Diſguiſe. The Friends in chace of a Beauty. Sequel of their Adventure.

THE diſtance to Warwick through Loughborough and Leiceſter was much the ſame as that by Aſhby de la Zouch and Atherſton; and Arthur, on leaving Mariton, took the latter road. For ſome time Edmund was abſorbed in thought; the happineſs he had enjoyed among the Aubreys, the new emotions excited by Emily, the neceſſity of ſubduing them, the pain of parting, and the long farewell he had taken, oppreſſed his heart. To his friend's recurring queſtion of

of "How are you Edmund?" he anſwered no more than, "Oh! very well, thank you:" and relapſed into ſilence, which was not noticed by Arthur, whoſe mind was equally occupied by his own ſecret, till Edmund, after repeated efforts to ſmother his feelings, put his handkerchief to his eyes and gave way to a ſhower of tears. When the violence of this emotion ſubſided, Arthur aſked him what was the matter; to which he replied, with more truth than candour, that he was overcome by reflecting on the happy time he had ſpent at Mariton, on its being paſſed, and on the little proſpect he had of repeating his viſits. Arthur joined in regretting the diſtance at which they lived, and ſaying he hoped notwithſtanding that they ſhould be frequently together, again became thoughtful.

At a little village, called Snarſton, about half way between Aſhby de la Zouch

Zouch and Atherſton, and near twelve miles from Mariton, Arthur told his friend that he had ſome buſineſs to tranſact, which it was neceſſary for him to diſpatch before they proceeded on their journey; and, ſtopping at a pretty lane, aſked him to alight from the gig and walk with him. They both got out, and Arthur deſired their attendant to go and refreſh the horſes at the village inn. Walking down the lane, Arthur ſaid: "My dear Edmund, I am very unhappy; and doubly ſo, as I dare not tell, even to you, the cauſe of my unhappineſs. I know I ſhould be eaſier if I unburdened my heart to you; and I wiſh to do it more than I can expreſs, but the ſecret belongs to another perſon. Never, never, will I have another ſecret which I may not communicate to you and to my father: but this, Edmund, is of ſuch a nature

" that you would deſpiſe me if I were ca-
" pable of divulging it." Edmund had been ſo abſorbed in other meditations, that he did not once think of the commiſſion he had received from Aubrey relative to his friend, and, even if he had thought of it, it was not his intention to execute it before their arrival at Melford: this ſpeech of Arthur's however, not only recalled it to his mind, but gave ſuch an opening for it, that he was about to convince him that he had no ſecret, when he was prevented by the appearance of a man getting over a ſtile cloſe by them. " Ha! Grant!" cried Arthur, " I was
" coming to you. I ſuppoſe you thought
" me dead at leaſt."—" Well, fegs! I
" didn't know what to make on't, not
" I, Maſter Rivers:" replied Grant, a decent looking countryman, who was now ſtanding in the lane with the two friends: " I thought, for my part, as
" how

"how you had given up all thoughts of "of the place—it's a ſweet pretty place, "and I mought have let it again and "again ſin I ſeed you, for all it be ſo re-"tired; and it wan't but laſt Saturday "a gentleman comed ater it, who ſaid "he would come again ſome time this "week to ſee nar if it were diſpoſed of." —"I am glad of it, Grant," ſaid Arthur, "for I am come to tell you that "I can't take it, and to pay you for the "time you have kept it unlet: come, "let's go back."

They got over the ſtile, into a footpath which was a ſhort cut to the farmer's, and, climbing up the ſteep ſides of two fields, came to an eminence that overlooked a beautiful country: a little way down a gradual ſlope ſtood a pretty cottage, almoſt concealed by trees and ſhrubs, and, at a conſiderable diſtance to the right, an indifferent farm-houſe, which

which belonged to Grant. They went into the cottage, which was handſomely furniſhed, and which Edmund ſaid was one of the neateſt and prettieſt things he had ever ſeen. "Well, Grant!" ſaid Arthur, "what do I owe you?"—"Oh!" replied Grant, "but a trifle, "Maſter Rivers." This was the ſecond time he had called Arthur *Rivers*, and Edmund was not a little ſurpriſed at it. "Not ſuch a trifle either, my good fel-"low," cried Arthur: "ſome nine or "ten guineas, I ſuppoſe."—"Oh! bleſs "you! no maſter," anſwered Grant, "not aboon a guinea and a half. The "young lady was here about a week "agone, and paid me up, and bid me "not to let it to any body elſe yet till I "heard more." At mention of the young lady Arthur looked at Edmund, and their eyes met. "She ſaid ſhe "would come again in a few days; and

"I ha

" I ha looked for her all yeſterday, and " to-day, and the day before." On this Arthur paid him the guinea and a half; and then ſtood ſome time at a window with Edmund, admiring the ſituation of the cottage, and the ſurrounding country.

The lane formed an elbow round the height on which the cottage ſtood; and the carriage road from the cottage fell into it about a hundred yards from the farm houſe. Looking towards it, Arthur ſaw company on horſeback, and pointed them out to the farmer. " Fegs!" ſaid Grant, " this maun be the lady her- " ſelf."—" Is it poſſible!" exclaimed Arthur: " ſhe muſt not ſee me. Grant! " What is to be done? I have very par- " ticular reaſons for not wiſhing to be ſeen " by her at preſent."—" Why! maſter " Rivers," replied he, " you and your " friend may go into that cloſet; it is

" not

"not likely ſhe'll open it; and, to make "ſure, you may bolt yourſelves in."— "And pray, my friend," ſaid Edmund, "who is the lady?"—"I beſeech you," cried Arthur, "not to aſk." Then withdrawing from the window, that they might not be obſerved, Arthur looked from a corner till he was fully ſatisfied that it was Lady Sudley herſelf. A gentleman rode by her ſide, and they were attended by a ſingle footman. Arthur made the farmer promiſe not to ſay a word about him; and, if ſhe offered to pay for the laſt week, to take the money without ſcruple. He then hurried with Edmund into the cloſet, ſending Grant out to receive the lady.

For ſome time ſhe ſtood talking with the farmer at the gate; at length ſhe entered the room, ſaying to her companion; "is not it a pretty little place?" —"A very ſweet place;" replied the gentle-

gentleman, in a voice familiar to Arthur's ear; "I was all over it the day before "yesterday, and a delightful retreat it is "at this time."—"Well, Mr. Grant," said he to the farmer, "as you and the "lady have settled that you are at liberty "to let it, I agree to take it for six "weeks certain, and I will send a ser- "vant here to-morrow with my bag- "gage."—"Very well, Sir," said the farmer, "it's all ready for you." The lady then saying that she should like some fruit, Grant left the room to go and bring her a plate of cherries out of the garden. As soon as he was gone, she put her friend in mind that he had very nearly called her Lady Sudley, at the gate, before Grant; and entreated him, as he regarded her reputation, to be careful. "I will indeed," replied he, "and I will always call you by my own "name." Arthur was confident that he

he knew the man who ſpoke; but, what with the confuſion he was in, and his ſurpriſe at what he heard, he could not recollect his perſon; his ſuſpence, however, was ſoon removed, by Lady Sudley's calling him by his name: it was no other than his friend; his gay, lively, agreeable friend Elton, whom he had often ſeen in her company at Warwick and at Alleſly; and who had ſo charmed him that he was very anxious he ſhould recover the good opinion of Aubrey. "My dear Elton," ſaid her Ladyſhip, "though I deſpiſe the world, I do not "want to be driven from it; and, as the "good people, who are ſo called, require "only appearances, they ought to be "indulged."—"Your Ladyſhip," ſaid Elton, "was not always ſo prudent."—"No more of that, if you love me Hal," cried ſhe, affectedly; "I was ſo pro-"ked with the qualms and abſurdities

" of the fooliſh lad you allude to, that I " very nearly expoſed myſelf to make " ſomething of him; but he was ſo ſen- " timental, and ſo godly, and ſo unhappy " about my ſoul, that he tired me to " death. I ſuſpected the laſt huff he " took would complete him: it is almoſt " two months ſince I ſaw him, and I " hope I ſhall never ſee him any more." —" He has been dangerouſly ill," ſaid Elton. " Yes," replied ſhe, " I heard " of his illneſs, but it was only a ſhort " one; I know he has been riding about " the country for a fortnight or three " weeks paſt. Indeed I did not want " him near me again; ſo he is a fool if " he thinks he mortifies me: believe " me, Elton, I never had a grain of af- " fection for him."—" Your Ladyſhip " need not be afraid," ſaid Elton, " I " have no jealouſy in my compoſition. " I confeſs I think him a fine youth,

" and

" and the family altogether are a fine fa-
" mily; though, as you obſerve of young
" Aubrey, a little too ſentimental and
" eccentric. I pity them for their miſ-
" fortunes."—" They are very poor, are
" not they?" ſaid Lady Sudley. " Oh!
" terribly reduced, poor things! replied
he: " how they manage to keep their
" heads above water, I can't tell. I do
" every thing I can for them. It was
" but the other day, if you will believe
" me, my dear Lady Sudley, that I gave
" the father a check on my banker for
" three hundred pounds."—" How good
" of you! Elton." " Not at all; I have
" a very great regard for the family,
" and I mean to do ſomething more
" for them, when I get in all my Uncle
" Trevor's outlying money."—" What
" kind of girls are the daughters?" ſaid
Lady Sudley. " Why really," replied
Elton, " charming young women; ele-

" gant and accompliſhed. Emily, the " elder, is very ſenſible; and Arthurina " is a merry little grig."—" Arthu- " rina!" cried Lady Sudley: " what a " fantaſtical name! Was not there ſome- " thing of an attachment between Mrs. " Aubrey and my brute of a Lord?"— " Yes," ſaid Elton, " but I don't remem- " ber the circumſtances; I was but a boy " at the time ſhe married."—" How " old do you take my ſqueamiſh ſpark to " be?"—" Not more than twenty, if ſo " much."—" I hope his father means to " make parſon of him, he is fit for no- " thing elſe in this world; and ſomething " he muſt do or ſtarve. I am ſorry I let " him dangle after me ſo long. Had " you been more explicit, my dear El- " ton, I ſhould have diſcharged him " long ago."—" I really thought your " Ladyſhip's heart ſeriouſly engaged." —" My heart!" exclaimed Lady Sud- ley,

ley, laughing, " engaged ſeriouſly ? " with ſuch a flint as Arthur Aubrey ! " He has no more notion of the paſſion " of love than a broomſtick : he is inca- " pable of it."—" If *you* failed to inſpire " it, my lovely Emma," ſaid Elton, " he muſt indeed be incapable of it. " Such a face and form as yours——" Here Grant returned with the fruit, and remained in the room till it was eat, talking of the cottage, its beauties, its conveniences, and the perſons who had occupied it : from which it appeared that the farmer had never been over ſcrupulous as to the purity of his tenants. Elton again told him to expect his ſervant with his things the next day ; and, the agreement being perfectly underſtood, went out with Lady Sudley, leaving the coaſt clear to the two aſtoniſhed friends, who, hearing the feet of the horſes as they

went from the cottage, came from their place of retreat.

During the converſation that had paſſed in their hearing, they at firſt looked with aſtoniſhment at each other, ſmiled as it proceeded, and at laſt with difficulty reſtrained themſelves from burſting into loud laughter. In this particular they made themſelves amends when honeſt Jack Elton and the lovely Lady Sudley were out of hearing. They ſtood gazing at each other, and laughing for ſome minutes without being able to ſpeak; and, in this mood, the farmer found them, on his return from the gate. "Fegs!" cried he, "I be glad to ſee "you ſo merry; for I was affrighted "out on my ſenſes for fear you ſhould "ha' burſt out, and quarelled for the "lady: ſhe's a ſpunky laſs, Maſter Ri-"vers."—"Very much ſo, Maſter "Grant," ſaid Arthur, "and I am

" vaſtly obliged to her. Was ſhe ever " here before with that gentleman ?"— " No, never. I never ſeed her but the " time ſhe come with you, and once " more about eight days ſin that ſhe " come, as I told you, and paid me."— " Well, farmer," ſaid Arthur, " next " time you ſee her, inform her where I " was while you were gathering her " cherries ; and, if you tell her that I " paid the laſt week's rent, it will be " a ſtrong proof, you know." He then turned to Smyth, and cried : " Come, Edmund ! we'll talk the mat- " ter as we go along." Bidding the farmer good-day, they left the cottage laughing.

" A pretty kind of ſecret this of " yours, Arthur !" ſaid Edmund, " as " they proceeded up the ſlope which " they had walked down : you ſee Mr. " Elton knows it, though I don't."—

" My dear Edmund," cried Arthur, " I never felt my heart so light and so " happy as at this moment."—" What! " my friend, at the moment your secret " is betrayed and your mistress forsakes " you?"—" Yes; at the moment that " my heart is all your own, and that I " have got fairly out of the clutches of " an abandoned woman."—" Of a very " handsome one, they say."—" Hand- " some enough; but, thank Heaven! " she has nothing but personal beauty: " had she ensnared my heart as she se- " duced my fancy, I should have re- " mained a wretch, a miserable wretch, " all my life: but she says very true, " she found my heart flint, untouched " by the passion of love. She had nei- " ther sense nor sentiment to gild vice " with; and, instead of finding intense " happiness to be the consequence, as I " conceived, of an intercourse with a

" woman,

" woman, I found ſhort fits of pleaſure
" puniſhed with long intervals of diſtaſte
" and the remorſe of ſecreſy. I firſt
" met this woman at Warwick, where I
" danced with her. I was off my
" guard, and ſhe ſucceeded in her at-
" tempt to inflame my fancy and my
" ſenſes. She firſt contrived to ſee me
" privately at Warwick, and I after-
" wards viſited her at her houſe at Al-
" leſley, while, for the ſake of appear-
" ances, I lodged at Coventry. I was
" very anxious for her reputation; for,
" though ſhe inſpired me with no eſteem,
" I had the vanity to believe that I had
" inſpired her with the paſſion of love.
" I thought myſelf the cauſe of her lapſe
" from innocence, and I would not have
" betrayed her for my life; on the con-
" trary, I felt myſelf bound to conſole,
" and, if poſſible, to reinſtate her in her
" own opinion, and the love of virtue,

" before there was any danger of her
" loſing her fame; but, inſtead of my
" gaining ground in this deſign, my re-
" ſolutions always gave way to her
" trifling, and I diſcovered that I ſtood
" no chance in a tête-à-tête. I wrote
" her a letter, diſguiſing my hand, and
" ſigning the fictitious name of Rivers,
" which I had taken in different excur-
" ſions; to be ſure, it might have ſerved
" my father for a part of a ſermon, but
" it was ſincere, Edmund; more ſin-
" cere than effectual, either as to her or
" myſelf. I thought more about her
" after I ſent my letter than I had ever
" done before: I became more and
" more anxious to ſee her again; I went,
" was laughed at, and ſubdued. It was
" during a viſit my family were making
" at Leiceſter, that I took the opportu-
" nity of ſeeing her; it was in that
" week that I had ſuch a ſtruggle be-

" tween

" tween my ſenſes and my underſtand-
" ing, that I at firſt completely yielded
" myſelf to the former, and had afer-
" wards nearly become a victim to the
" emotions produced by the latter. In
" that week, I rode with her to this
" place, which was recommended to her
" by her confidential maid, a French-
" woman, who had lived there with her
" former miſtreſs; and I almoſt con-
" ſented to its being taken by me, un-
" der the name of Rivers, in order to
" facilitate our meeting, as it is at no
" very great diſtance from Alleſley, and
" little more than an hour's gallop from
" Mariton. All I did, however, was
" to tell the man not to let it till he
" heard again from me. My not im-
" mediately cloſing with the farmer
" offended her. She hardly ſpoke to
" me all the way back, but to ſay ſome
" ſarcaſtic and ill-natured thing; and,

" at her own houſe, ſhe opened upon
" me with all the fury of a tygreſs. I
" ſpent the whole night in ſtriving to
" pacify her, and it was broad day be-
" fore I had any ſucceſs: at length ſhe
" moderated, and a reconciliation took
" place, on my aſſuring her that I would
" take the cottage. I was too much
" agitated to think of conſequences; I
" ſpoke unmeaningly; I mounted my
" horſe without taking either reſt or
" refreſhment, and I rode all the way
" from Alleſley to Mariton without
" ſtopping. At home, alone, I formed
" new reſolutions; I deteſted myſelf for
" my inſincerity to my father: I recol-
" lected your uncle's Seraphina to my
" own diſadvantage, and with horror;
" for his father had not been ſuch a fa-
" ther to him as mine to me; his Sera-
" phina had underſtanding and talents
" combined with beauty; mine was ſilly

" and

" and paſſionate. I determined to break
" with her. I wrote, tore my letter,
" wrote again, and again deſtroyed what
" I had written; and, before I finally de-
" termined, a fever, the conſequence of
" my agitation and imprudent haſte in
" the ride home, ſeized me: a ſtate of
" delirium enſued, and my diſorder, as
" you know, had nearly carried me off.
" In the courſe of my recovery, my
" mind has dwelt with the greateſt an-
" xiety on the ſhocking ſtate of diſſi-
" mulation in which I have been living
" for ſome time paſt with my family;
" with a father, whoſe pride it is to have
" ſubſtituted in his plan of education
" love and candour for authority and
" rigour; whoſe chief object is the wel-
" fare and happineſs of his children,
" and who, by blending the tenderneſs
" of a parent with the confidence and
" amiable qualities of a companion, has

" produced a friendſhip of a nature
" unuſually delightful. Oh! Edmund,
" I am unworthy of him!"—" My dear
" friend;" cried Edmund, " that ſenti-
" ment more than reſtores the loſt por-
" tion of worthineſs: you are worthier
" of him than ever; worthier than if
" you had never had occaſion to expreſs
" this feeling. You muſt loſe no time
" in opening your heart to him: you
" can have no compunction, now that
" we have witneſſed a ſcene which diſ-
" charges you from all reſerve, and ren-
" ders ſilence no longer a point of deli-
" cacy."—" But how," cried Arthur,
" how ſhall I be able to mention it to
" him?"—" Write to him," replied
Edmund, " from Melford; a letter will
" be a leſs painful mode of communica-
" tion to both than a perſonal confeſſion.
" Be aſſured, Arthur, it will not only
" remove your wretchedneſs on the
" ſubject,

"ſubject, but will exalt you in your fa-
"ther's opinion, and, if poſſible, increaſe
"his love."—"How ſweet it is," cried Arthur, "to have a friend! What a
"load is already caſt off my mind by
"your participation of this ſecret! Yes,
"I will take your advice, I will write to
"my father fully from Melford: his
"pity and encouragement are the only
"things now wanting to complete my
"happineſs; for as to forgiveneſs, oh!
"my dear Edmund, he is incapable of a
"ſentiment towards his children on
"which the idea of forgiveneſs could
"be founded."

Edmund was more and more charmed with his friend, whoſe deſcription of his father in the courſe of this converſation, joined with the recollection of what had paſſed between Aubrey and himſelf, had more than once awakened a wiſh that nature had been equally propitious to him:

him: not but that he poſſeſſed in his uncle all he could deſire in a parent; but the ſtriking contraſt between his lot and Arthur's, in this reſpect, was a painful reflexion. To be the ſon of a man capable of deſerting him, of ill-treating his mother, of deceiving ſuch a ſpirit as his uncle's, weighed upon his heart. A tear ſtarted to his eye at Arthur's remark; he wiped it away, ſaying, "How "ſweet muſt it be to have a father! "Oh, God! how can a man forſake his "child!"

The keenneſs of Edmund's feelings were equalled by the refinement of his ſentiments. Far from uſing the opportunity to inform his friend of the confidence Aubrey had placed in him, he felt how much more grateful it would be both to him and to Arthur that the communication ſhould be made by the latter, before he was apprized of his ſecret being

being known to the former; and, accordingly, not a word or look escaped him, by which his friend might be induced to suspect his father privy to his intercourse with Lady Sudley, to whose conduct and sentiments he again adverted, and congratulated him on the fortunate recovery of his liberty. The conversation between her ladyship and Elton returning to their recollection, Arthur gave the latter credit for some of his sentiments, and reprobated him for others; and, having explained the late transaction respecting the check, they arrived at Snareston, laughing.

The horses being refreshed, they got into their gig, and proceeded at a round trot towards Atherston. "At this rate," said Edmund, "it is not unlikely that I "may be blessed with a sight of our "beauty."—"That would be awkward "too," cried Arthur, pulling up; "we'll

"go

" go a little ſlower."—" I ſhould enjoy " your paſſing the gentleman and lady," replied Edmund, " with a recognizing " bow."—" Shall we give chace then ?" —" Do." Arthur on this gave the horſe his head, and they went forward with great ſpeed; but without the effect propoſed. They paſſed through Atherſton, and arrived at Nuneaton, without ſeeing the objects of their purſuit. While they halted here, they ſaw an Atherſton poſt-chaiſe, the blinds up and the poſt-boy mounted, drive rapidly through the town; and, about half an hour after, a ſervant on horſeback, leading two horſes, one of which had a ſide-ſaddle on. Arthur immediately recognized Lady Sudley's bay gelding and Elton's footman, whoſe appearance with the horſes made it very clear who were in the poſt-chaiſe. The purſuit was now given up as a hopeleſs one, and the friends proceeded more gently

gently to Coventry, where they intended to dine. From the time they left Grant's cottage, Arthur's ſpirits ſeemed to riſe; while Edmund's, except at the outſet of the chace after Lady Sudley, gradually ſunk, till he became ſo abſent at times that Arthur could not help taking notice of it.

On the road, though they travelled at an eaſy pace, they overtook Elton's man, to whom Arthur ſpoke. After aſking how his maſter did;—"Is he "married, Frank, ſince I ſaw him?" ſaid Arthur with a ſmile, looking at Lady Sudley's horſe.—"Oh! dear! no "ſir," anſwered Frank, preſſing his lips together.—"That ſide-ſaddle is a "capital nag; is it your maſter's?"—"No, ſir; it is the lady's."—"Oh! "it's the lady's! What's her name?"—"'Pon my word, ſir, I never aſked."—"And I ſhall take it for granted you "don't

" don't know: but where is your maſter " at preſent?"—" Why, ſir, I can't " exactly ſay, my maſter has been ſo un- " ſettled lately: he is ſometimes at " Warwick, ſometimes at Birmingham; " laſt night he was at Coventry; and I " don't know where he'll be to-night." —" Well! Frank," ſaid Arthur, " give " my compliments to him and to the " lady that belongs to the horſe, and tell " them I wiſh them their health at " Snareſton." Having driven on a little way, he turned to look back, and, ſeeing Frank and his own attendant talking, did not doubt that he ſhould get more information at ſecond-hand than Frank thought it prudent to give in a direct manner. He was not wrong in his conjecture; and he learned at Coventry, from his man, that Lady Sudley, on her return from Grant's, had met him coming from watering the horſes, had looked hard.

hard at one of them, and aſked if it were not Mr. Aubrey's? had inquired where he had been, where he was going, and if any one was with him. From Frank he had heard, that the lady and gentleman, as ſoon as they parted with him, ſet off a gallop to Atherſton, where, leaving their horſes to bait, they took a poſt-chaiſe and proceeded without delay. The reaſon of the gig's not overtaking them was now very clear to Arthur and Edmund, who ſat down to dinner extremely diverted and delighted with the adventures of the morning. Towards the end of their repaſt, the waiter of the inn, to whom Arthur was well known, gave him a letter, and ſaid, that the perſon who brought it waited for an anſwer. Acquainted with the writing of the ſuperſcription, he laid it on the table and finiſhed his meal, which he made with more appetite and reliſh than he had done

done for a long time before. The cloth removed, and the waiter withdrawn, he opened the letter, ſmiled, and read aloud what follows:

"I heard by the mereſt chance of "your being in this part of the country. "What can have kept you ſo long from "me? I heard of your being well weeks "ago. You know my love for you— "do not give me cauſe to repent it. I "ſhall expect you at Allesley to-night. "If you ſhould have been informed of "my being at Grant's cottage, in com- "pany, ſuſpend your opinion—I will "explain every thing to your ſatisfac- "tion. I was told that you intend go- "ing on towards Glouceſterſhire without "ſtopping: I cannot, I will not believe "it. In ſpite of the quarrel we had the "day before we parted, I will not be- "lieve you ſo cruel, ſo devoid of feel- "ing,

" ing, and of honour. The quarrels of
" lovers, you know, ſerve but to increaſe
" the pleaſures of love. Come as ſoon
" as it is dark: Juſtine ſhall ſee all clear,
" and be ready to receive you as uſual.
" It will be an age to me till we meet.
" Write to me by the bearer, and do not
" fail to tell me that you will come.
" My Aubrey, I am ſure, will not diſ-
" appoint his adoring

" EMMA.

" Monday, 4 o'clock."

Arthur and Edmund looked with aſtoniſhment at each other: they were little acquainted with the diſſimulation and ſtratagems of artful women; and at firſt, inſtead of laughing at this new proof of Lady Sudley's hypocriſy and depravity, they exclaimed againſt it with horror. " What a ſhocking woman!" cried Edmund;

mund; "adding falſehood to falſehood! "heaping crime upon crime!"—"I "could not have conceived this poſſi- "ble," exclaimed Arthur, "without "ſuch conviction."—"What will you "do?" ſaid Edmund.—"Why!" re- plied he, "the ſooner we order our "horſes and leave Coventry the better." —"Write her word," ſaid Edmund, "that you ſhould only *tire her to death* "*by your ſentiments, godlineſs, and an-* "*xiety for her ſoul;* that *you are only fit* "*to be a parſon;* that *ſhe cannot poſſibly* "*think of letting you dangle any longer* "*after her, ſince the immaculate Mr. El-* "*ton has been ſo explicit;* that *you are a* "*flint, and know no more of the paſſion* "*of love than a broomſtick.*" This ſar- caſtic repetition of Lady Sudley's words made Arthur laugh, and merriment took place of horror. The gig was ordered

ordered to the door; and the friends, forgetting her ladyſhip's meſſenger, who was waiting for an anſwer, ſet off for Warwick.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

True Love not eaſily ſubdued. The Nature of it. Difficult to be kept a Secret. A Scheme of Pleaſure.

All reſerve, all diſguiſe, being baniſhed from Arthur's heart, he proceeded on his journey full of life and ſpirits; while a concealed ſtruggle agitating Edmund's, depreſſed him in proportion. The former talked away, the latter was ſilent and abſent. At Warwick they put up for the night, intending to ſpare their horſes as much as poſſible; and here Arthur was again ſo ſtruck with the alteration of Edmund's countenance, and manner altogether, that he began to ſuſpect that ſomething was preying upon his

his mind; and he resolved to make him disclose it.

The conquest of the passions and desires with which men are assailed, is rendered less difficult by early habits; and Edmund, from his infancy, had been taught to oppose and to conquer: his uncle, both by precept and example, had assisted him in the regulation of his mind, and no youth ever possessed a greater degree of self-command. At Melford, engaged in study, fond of his mother and sister, no object of a different love to that he felt for them had presented itself to his heart, nor had he conceived that he should ever feel a passion which it would not be easy for him to subdue. The sight of beauty had been no rarity to him; he had been pleased with it, he had admired it, but the emotion it raised was slight; he dreaded not its impression, and he

flattered himſelf that he was maſter over the paſſion it uſually inſpired, and which he underſtood to be love. Confident in his ſtrength, he did not diſcover his danger, till he learned from experience that it did not ariſe from beauty. He had formed a friendſhip with Arthur, and he wiſhed to form one with his ſiſter. His attempt to do this unfolded that congeniality which gives to beauty its unconquerable charm, and lights a flame that cannot be extinguiſhed. Edmund, as has been ſeen, ſoon found that he had a much ſeverer ſtruggle to make than he had imagined; his heart had not been captivated through his ſenſes, but his ſenſes charmed through his heart: it was not till he was in love with Emily that he became ſenſible of the magic of her perſon, and felt that the friendſhip he ſought had led to love. As it was a genuine paſſion, riſing from its pure and noble

noble ſource, the neceſſity of ſmothering it was hard, doubly hard on Edmund: conformity of mind, virtue, intellect, and beauty combined; nothing was wanting to warrant hope, and ſtamp duration, but that affluence which had been unaccountably removed from their view, on the one ſide by the negligence of an uncle, and on the other by the cruelty of a father. Though the loweſt of the neceſſary combinations either in exciting or juſtifying the paſſion, yet, to a mind well formed, it was too important to be unheeded. Edmund could not reconcile to his feelings the thought of involving the object of his love in the difficulties and diſtreſſes of poverty; and, accordingly, when he detected, he reſolved to ſubdue his paſſion. Flight and abſence, he had read, were the beſt auxiliaries in ſuch a conteſt, and he loſt no time in enliſting them in his ſervice;

but now he found, the farther he went the more powerful the paſſion with which Emily had inſpired him: even the occurrences of the day, ſo important to the repoſe of his beloved friend, could not baniſh her from his thoughts for half an hour; and he was inclined to doubt the truth of his reading. But whether true or not, whether his paſſion ſhould defy himſelf and his auxiliaries, or outlive his youth, he thought his mind equal to ſupporting it without moleſting her. His ſpirits might ſink, his health be injured, his life be undermined, but Emily ſhould never know that ſhe was the cauſe of the melancholy fate that awaited him. Such were the thoughts on which he dwelled when they arrived at Warwick.

As they alighted Arthur propoſed to him a walk before dark on one of the banks of the Avon, in order to take a view of the caſtle and town. Edmund con-

conſented; and they ſtrolled for ſome time, obſerving the ſituation of Warwick and the ſurrounding country, and talking on the adventures of the day. At length Arthur, anxious to relieve the mind of his friend by drawing it forth, ſaid to him: "What a difference, my "dear Edmund, is there between the "ſtate of my feelings to-day and yeſter-"day. While my ſecret was pent up "in my own boſom, I was the moſt "miſerable of beings; I lamented that "the ſtrength of my conſtitution and "the ſkill of my phyſician had ſnatched "me from the grave: now that you "ſhare it with me, and that I am able "again to treat my father with un-"bounded confidence, I am happy be-"yond expreſſion. There cannot be "a greater puniſhment than having a "ſecret; than being obliged to lock up "one's heart from thoſe we love."—

Edmund fetched a deep ſigh. "Nay, "give it vent in words, my friend," ſaid Arthur; "why conceal *your* ſecret from "me?"—"*My* ſecret!" exclaimed Edmund, turning pale as he ſpoke.—"You "may conceal *the ſecret* from me, Ed- "mund, but you cannot conceal from "me that there is one lying heavy at "your heart, and want of curioſity in "me would be want of friendſhip. If "any Lady Sudley, if any Seraphina" —"Oh, no!" cried Edmund, with another ſigh.—"Then what is it, "my friend," ſaid Arthur, "that op- "preſſes your heart? Nothing but a cri- "minal conduct like mine ſhould have "power to do it. I know you will be "eaſier, Smyth, when you have opened "yourſelf to me: I have a right to your "confidence, and I ſhould not deſerve "if I did not claim it."—"I will not "deny," replied Edmund, "that there

"is

" is a weight upon my heart; and I am
" ſure, my dear Arthur, that I ſhould be
" eaſier in ſome degree were I to tell
" you the cauſe of it: but —, what ſhall
" I ſay — ? I cannot tell you what is
" paſſing in my mind, without injuring
" you, by binding you again to a ſecrecy
" from which your whole family muſt
" be excluded."—" Stay," cried Ar-
thur, " let me ſet you to rights there. I
" ſhould not hold myſelf bound to diſ-
" cloſe to my father any ſecret of yours,
" in which he can have no concern.
" Such diſcloſure makes no part of our
" notions of candour and confidence:
" all that relates to myſelf, to him, to the
" whole family; my ſentiments, my con-
" duct; in ſhort, all that it imports him
" to know, are eſſential to that open
" character, that ſingleneſs of heart, on
" which he juſtly lays ſo great a ſtreſs,
" and which he has taught all his chil-

" dren to conſider as the firſt ſtep in " the ladder to Heaven: but do not " imagine that he would require, or " even be pleaſed that I ſhould divulge " a ſecret of yours, which no way relates " to him. You may, therefore, ſafely " unboſom yourſelf, and confide the " cauſe of your uneaſineſs to your friend, " who will at leaſt aſſiſt you in bearing, " if he cannot relieve it."—" You are " worthy of your father, you are all wor- " thy of one another," cried Edmund; " and I would rather die than interrupt the " heavenly confidence that reigns among " you. You ſhall excuſe this reſerve, " Arthur, this ſingle reſerve; I will " have no other thought to which my " heart will not freely admit you."— " Anſwer me but theſe queſtions," ſaid Arthur: " Does it implicate the virtue " of another? Have you promiſed ſe- " crecy?"—" Neither; yet you have

" yourſelf

" yourſelf confirmed the neceſſity of " keeping this ſecret from you."

Edmund was not aware of the extent of this reply. " How can that be?" ſaid Arthur, " unleſs the aſſurance that " I did not conſider my family as in- " cluded in a confidence that related to " yourſelf; unleſs —" The truth flaſhed upon his mind; a complacent ſmile ſettled on his face; he looked at Edmund with the affection of a brother: " 'Tis " as I gueſs," ſaid he. Smyth turned pale. " Edmund, my dear Edmund!" continued Arthur, " there are now no " ſecrets on either ſide. My ſiſter —" A ſudden revulſion took place in Smyth's frame; the blood, which had forſaken his face, now ruſhed back to it, doubled in quantity; and Arthur regarded the bluſh as a full confirmation. " Yes, " Edmund," continued he, " you are " in love with Emily! Confide in me,

" my friend; you never ſhall have " cauſe to repent your confidence; nor " need you bluſh for having loſt your " heart to ſuch a girl; one more lovely, " or more deſerving of my friend, does " not exiſt."—" I know not, Arthur," ſaid Edmund, " whether this be exactly " fair, or whether I ought to permit " you to wreſt my emotions to the con- " firmation of your opinion; but I feel " too much pleaſure in this effuſion of " your friendſhip to reſiſt the oppor- " tunity of ſaying, that I am reſolved not " to encourage a paſſion ſo void of all " hope. Yes, Arthur, it is the con- " ſciouſneſs of this hopeleſs paſſion, for " I will not deny what you have diſco- " vered, that preys upon my mind; a " paſſion which, however I may ſtifle it, " I feel I ſhall never conquer. But, as " you have extracted this confeſſion " from me, I call upon you, in the

" name

" name of friendſhip, to keep it from " the knowledge of your ſiſter; it can " be of no moment to her, and I pro- " miſe you that ſhe ſhall never know it " from me." — " You are in haſte," cried Arthur, " to promiſe what I do " not require, and what I ſhall be un- " happy to find neceſſary. Let me " ſpeak of it to my father, Edmund." — " If you think it improper," replied Smyth, " to know that I love your ſiſ- " ter without communicating my un- " happy ſecret to him, I will not require " your ſilence; but, when you recollect " that I ſhall never afterwards be able " to feel myſelf at eaſe in his preſence, if " you can bring yourſelf, on my aſſurance " of never opening my lips to any other " but you on the ſubject, and on my " promiſe of ſtruggling againſt this paſ- " ſion, to conſider it as unimportant to " your father, I could wiſh the know-

" ledge

"ledge of it confined to ourſelves."—
"You miſtake me," ſaid Arthur; "my
"deſire to mention it to him ariſes from
"a hope that the communication might
"lead to a reſult propitious to your paſ-
"ſion, which I do not ſee in ſo unhappy
"a light as you do. Why ſhould not
"you love Emily? Why ſhould not you
"have her?"—"What!" cried Smyth,
"a poor, deſerted wretch, ignorant of
"his father, who may be yet living for
"aught he knows! an intruder, with
"his mother and ſiſter, on the pittance
"of a benevolent uncle! a peaſant,
"doomed to till the ground for ſub-
"ſiſtence?"—"Poh! poh! nonſenſe,
"my dear Edmund," ſaid Arthur: "as
"to worldly diſtinctions, you are a gen-
"tleman; and, as to mental ones, my
"ſiſter could never have a huſband who
"ranks higher: the only thing to be
"conſidered is, how you are to live;

" and, if my father and your uncle put " their heads together, who knows what " they may ſtrike out?" — " They " would think me mad, Arthur; it would " make them both unhappy. Indeed, " it muſt not be! and then what would " Miſs Aubrey ſay?" — " Say! why " that ſhe was the happieſt and moſt " fortunate of her ſex."— " For God's " ſake! my friend," cried Edmund, " don't put me out of my ſenſes. To " raiſe hope without probability is to " lay a foundation for madneſs."— " E- " mily," ſaid Arthur, " will never act " imprudently, I am certain; ſhe will " not, like you, ſet about falling in love, " but I am ſure ſhe has a very great re- " gard for you; and, if my father were " to tell her that you could ſupport a fa- " mily happily, my life for it ſhe would " be yours in preference to the richeſt " man in England." — " Spare me! " ſpare

" ſpare me! my dear friend: if you " give me ſuch an idea, you will render " it impoſſible for me to ſuppreſs hope; " and what will become of me then?"— " Let me have the management of this," ſaid Arthur; " I'll not mention it to my " father without ſounding him; and, if " prudence preſs you to give up Emily " as a miſtreſs, I know you will act like " yourſelf, and look upon her as a ſiſter: " but, as for my part, I declare I don't de- " ſpair of calling you my brother; and if, " on converſing with my father, I do not " alter my opinion, I will not heſitate to " diſcover your affection for Emily, and " I am confident it will require no great " uſe of eloquence to make her eſpouſe " your cauſe." Edmund, delighted and relieved by this converſation, told Arthur that he left him to do as he thought beſt; and that, be his fate what it would, he ſhould ever eſteem himſelf moſt for-

tunate

tunate in having ſuch a friend. He reſumed a great degree of cheerfulneſs, and converſed in the moſt unreſerved and eaſy manner with Arthur, who ſeemed to be doubly dear to him, on becoming the confident of his paſſion for Miſs Aubrey.

As they returned towards the town, the fine tints of an autumn evening, which were ſpread through the ſky and over the landſcape before them, excited their admiration, and brought to Arthur's mind the beauties of Sudley Caſtle, which he deſcribed to Edmund in ſuch terms of rapture as raiſed in him a great deſire to ſee the place. Being in no haſte to terminate their journey, they agreed to ſpend the whole of the next day in viſiting it, and in lounging at Stratford, and on the banks of the Avon. As the execution of this agreement, ſo far as it related to Sudley Caſtle, depended upon the

the abſence of its lord, it was neceſſary to inquire whether he were in the country or not; and at the inn they learned, to their great mortification, that he was at his ſeat.

The diſappointment expreſſed by Edmund, determined Arthur to get a ſight of the grounds at leaſt, notwithſtanding the preſence of Lord Sudley; and though, in arriving at Warwick, he had reſolved to pay no viſit there, he called on a gentleman, to whom he had been introduced by Mr. Rowley, and through whom he thought it likely that he ſhould obtain his object. He found that though, when his lordſhip was at home, it was more difficult to get a ſight of the houſe, a walk through the grounds was rarely refuſed, on a previous application of a few hours to the ſteward; to whom the gentleman accordingly wrote, and, as the manſion was well worth ſeeing, requeſted

that

that the ſtrangers might be permitted to go over it, if they could be indulged without any offence to Lord Sudley. This letter Arthur immediately diſpatched to the ſteward; from whom he received an anſwer before he went to bed, by which he was informed that, by coming early in the morning, he might go over the houſe before his lordſhip was out of bed, and that he never roſe before nine or ten o'clock. Pleaſed with the proſpect of gratifying their wiſh, and happy in the mutual and unbounded confidence which had been this day eſtabliſhed between them, they retired to reſt, determining to be very early next morning at Sudley Caſtle.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XL.

A Visit to Sudley-Castle. Edmund loses his Way and achieves an heroic Deed. Arthur's Reception at Melford.

The morning was fine: the travellers left Warwick about seven o'clock; and, in less than half an hour, Arthur pointed out to Edmund the lofty turrets of Sudley-Castle, peeping through the rich foliage of majestic woods. For several miles, between Warwick and Stratford, many beautiful glimpses are caught of this elegant seat; and Edmund had admired it as he passed before on his way to Mariton: but the beauty of the aspect it now presented was heightened by imagination, from the account he had received

received from Arthur, and he saw it with double pleasure. Turning to the left from the high road, they drove down a wide handsome lane, lined on each side with large elms: and, at the distance of a mile and a half, came to the little village of Burford, where they alighted at the house of Lord Sudley's steward, who sent a man with them up to the castle, and in the mean time ordered their horses to be taken care of. Arthur took pains to inform himself that there was no likelihood of his meeting Lord Sudley, for, though he had no respect for him, and even felt a kind of retrospective resentment against him for his infamous conduct towards his mother, there was a certain consciousness about him, which assured him that he would have no satisfaction in a sight of his Lordship; and, as they walked from Burford, he hinted to Edmund that he should like to get through

through the apartments as fast as they could.

They entered the house by a flight of steps, under a great portico supported by four lofty Corinthian columns, and went into a well proportioned hall, finished in plain stucco, and adorned with vases and lamps on handsome brackets: before them was the grand staircase; the walls and cieling of which were ornamented with pannels and festoons of stucco. They were first shown into the breakfast parlour, where they saw several fine landscapes, and some family portraits. Here Edmund, gazing a considerable time at the picture of a girl, desired Arthur to look at it, and then asked him how he liked it. "The "countenance," said Arthur, "is most "lovely; I could look at it till I was "captivated, were it not for those fright-"ful stiff stays that squeeze to death the "graces

" graces of nature."—" Say you ſo, my " friend?" cried Edmund, " then I adviſe " you not to go to Melford, if you wiſh " not to be captivated entirely; for you " will find that face, look at it and " remember it, glowing with life and " health, and ſupported by a form in " which none of the graces of nature are " ſqueezed to death. It is preciſely, " feature for feature, line for line, cha- " racter and all, the countenance of my " ſiſter; and could not have been more " like her had it been done for her."— " She muſt be a charming girl indeed," ſaid Arthur, " and faith the danger of " living under the ſame roof cannot but " be great."—" Whoſe portrait is this?" ſaid Edmund to the conductor. " That, " Sir," replied the man, " is the portrait " of the old Lady Sudley, my Lord's mo- " ther, taken when ſhe was Lady Matilda " Darley, at an early age." Edmund expreſſed

expreſſed his wonder at the likeneſs, and Arthur ſtood for ſome time contemplating it, ſaying, as he left it, that the painter had thrown a great deal of ſoul into his canvas.

From this they went into other rooms decorated with the works of the moſt celebrated painters; but, not having time to examine them, they contented themſelves with glancing them over, and with admiring the elegance of the apartments. They were moſt delighted with the library and drawing-room, particularly the former, which was ſuperb, eighty feet in length and twenty in height. On one ſide it had ſeven receſſes; one of which was the entrance from the hall, the other ſix were filled with books, and in front of each was a buſt of ſome ancient or modern genius placed on a pedeſtal. On the ſame ſide were two ſuperb chimney-pieces, compoſed

poſed of rich antique marble. The entrances at each end were formed to correſpond with the other receſſes, and were highly ornamented. The other ſide of the room, which looked on the garden, had eight magnificent windows, and a pair of folding glaſs doors that opened upon the lawn, affording a delightful proſpect. The drawing-room was large and magnificent, and the elegant decorations of it were adjuſted with taſte. "This is ſuperb," ſaid Arthur, admiring the chimney-piece, which was of rich Egyptian marble; "and yet "I ſhould not be a bit more happy "to ſit before a fire here, than I am at "the parſonage. How ſhould you like "to have Sudley Caſtle, Edmund, to live "in for the reſt of your life?"—"How "ſhould I like it!" cried Edmund; "Oh! Arthur, to be able to offer ſuch a "place as this to the object of one's love!

" I never felt ambitious emotions before,
" but the thought of that object expands
" my ſoul. Nothing can be too grand
" or too noble for her, and while I look
" round me, I feel equal to the greatneſs
" I would offer. In what are you or I
" inferior to this lord, who is ſoaking in
" his bed while we are really enjoying his
" property; a man unable to give or re-
" ceive happineſs! Yes, Arthur, were I
" maſter of this place I ſhould enjoy it
" better than its preſent owner."—
" Were I maſter of it," ſaid Arthur,
" I would immediately change it for
" Aubrey-Hall; yet, hang it, I can be
" as happy at Mariton parſonage as in
" either of them."—" I alſo thought,"
ſaid Edmund, " that I could be happy
" in a hut, but my mind is altered, Ar-
" thur; I feel as if I wanted a throne to
" beſtow: but I will not wiſh; I will
" be ſuperior to that madneſs at leaſt."

They

They now quitted the houſe, and ſtrolled through the grounds, where they continually met with the fineſt picturesque ſubjects, and where they wandered for hours enchanted with the ſcenery, which was in ſome places wild and ſublime, and in others regular and beautiful. Edmund formed no wiſh to be maſter of theſe delightful ſcenes; but how worthy Miſs Aubrey was to be miſtreſs of them was a thought that attended all the pleaſure he felt in viewing them. After ſitting a conſiderable time in a ruſtic alcove, admiring the winding of the Avon along wooded banks and through diſtant paſtures, Arthur roſe and propoſed to return to Burford and purſue their journey. As they approached the houſe, Edmund recollected that he had left his whip in the alcove, on which he begged Arthur to go on and order the chaiſe while he went back

for it, saying that he would be with him before he was ready. "You must make "haste then," said Arthur, "for I shall "have all ready in less than five mi- "nutes."—"I shall hardly be with you "in twenty," said Edmund. Here they parted, and Edmund walking a quick pace soon found his whip.

Returning by a serpentine walk, which, about half way from the alcove, diverged into two paths, his thoughts all absorbed by Miss Aubrey, he took the wrong one, and proceeded a considerable way before he recollected himself. He turned to go back, when a sound of voices, evidently of two men in earnest talk, struck his ear. He looked about, and listened to ascertain whence it proceeded, when he saw, through a thick wood, the back of a bower, to which his eye was led by the sound. Presently two suspicious men crept out of the bower, and came round

to

to the back of it, where they took pieces of black crape out of their pockets and diſguiſed their faces. Edmund inſtantly unperceived ſkreened himſelf by the ſide of a large oak growing near the walk. "He is coming;" ſaid one of them. "Cut his throat," replied the other. "I tell you, no;" cried the firſt, "we "ſhall be found out by the blood or the "knife: if he is found hanging it will be "ſuppoſed he did it himſelf."—"Huſh! "get the gag ready." Edmund, from his ſtation, ſaw a man croſs a lawn in the middle of this retired ſhrubbery, who he had no doubt was the intended victim of theſe murderers, and, though horror-ſtruck, he could not help wondering at the daring attempt to commit ſuch a crime in the face of day and ſo near the houſe. "Help!" cried a tremulous voice, which was immediately ſtopped.

Edmund had no weapon, and only his whip in his hand; but he was not of a nature to conſider, on ſuch an occaſion, difficulties or perſonal danger, and haſtily putting aſide the intercepting branches of the underwood which had ſerved to conceal him, he puſhed round the bower. The aſſaſſins, too buſy at their horrid work to attend to his approach, had already gagged their victim; and one was holding his arms while the other was ſtruggling to put a cord over his head. Edmund, darting forward, ſtruck the latter with the butt end of his whip, on which the other man, releaſing the arms of the devoted wretch, who trembled every limb, drew a ſhort cutlaſs and aimed a ſtroke at Edmund, who, perceiving his intent, received it on his arm, and, cloſing with the fellow, wrenched the cutlaſs from his hand, on which he fled. Finding himſelf attacked

tacked behind, Edmund turned, and dextrouſly parrying a blow aimed at his throat, made a ſtroke at the ſecond villain, which cut deep into his cheek. Deſerted by his aſſociate, he alſo fled; and their conqueror was about to purſue them, when he was ſeized by the perſon whoſe life he had ſaved, who ſhook his head, and by a ſign requeſted aſſiſtance in removing the gag which one of the villains had placed upon his mouth. "I "ſhall loſe them;" cried Edmund, "have "patience till I come back." The man claſped his hands in an imploring poſture; on which his champion cut the knot of the gag, and then would have purſued the murderers, whom he ſaw bruſhing through the oppoſite woods, had he not been prevented by the ſtranger, who, holding him, ſaid in a feeble voice, but with an authoritative tone: "Stay: you have done enough with

" them—I am extremely agitated—I
" have hardly power even to thank you,
" but aſſiſt me back to the houſe and
" you ſhall find me not ungrateful."

Edmund now ſcrutinized the figure before him. He was a tall emaciated man, broad over the ſhoulders, but with a cheſt which ſunk inwards: his legs were hardly able to bear the weight of his body, and ſeemed to have been injured by the effects of the gout. His countenance had ſomething penetrating in it, yet his eyes were hollow, his cheeks lank, and his features altogether beſpoke more decay than age. He was genteely dreſſed, and had the air of a worn-out faſhionable debauchee. Edmund had no doubt that it was Lord Sudley himſelf, and in ſpite of what he had heard of him, the evident puniſhment he ſuffered in the loſs of health and in premature old age, combined with the delightful con-

ſciouſneſs

ſciouſneſs of having ſaved his life, excited in him, not only pity, but a degree of affection by no means unaccountable to thoſe who have conferred important obligations on another: for there is a principle in nature which leads men to love thoſe whom they ſerve, as well as to ſerve thoſe whom they love; and the former impulſe is ſometimes the more powerful one. Edmund, with a look of united pity and affection, offered his arm, which was accepted by Lord Sudley, who, leaning on him, walked ſlowly acroſs the green into an alley leading to a private ſubterranean paſſage, which conducted them to the lower part of the houſe. The nobleman having locked the gate of the paſſage, they aſcended a ſtone ſtair-caſe, which brought them to a landing on the weſt ſide of the houſe, opening into a ſuite of apartments chiefly occupied by his Lordſhip. Lord

Sudley was no longer the ſtrong Herculean Lord Sudley who, ſome twenty years before, had projected the ſcheme of carrying off the injured Miſs Melvil by force, but a poor nervous creature, reduced by a life of debauchery to the ſhadow of a man falling into the grave. He thanked his deliverer without animation, ſcarcely looking at him, while he attended to the reſtoration of his own ſpirits by applying the powerful ſtimulation of a certain tincture, of which he daily ſwallowed large potions.

When he had taken his doſe, he aſked Edmund if he knew whom he had delivered from the hands of the aſſaſſins. Edmund replied that he preſumed it was Lord Sudley himſelf. "You are right, "young man," ſaid his Lordſhip, "and "though I know not how you came to "be ſo near the ſcene of villany, I hold "myſelf bound to ſerve you; therefore,

"before

" before I assemble my people, let me " understand who you are, and whether " you are in want of assistance." Edmund, disgusted with the cold gratitude of the peer, said that he did indeed want assistance; but of a nature which he believed it was not in his lordship's power to bestow. " I am sorry for that," said Lord Sudley, staring at the noble youth, who stood before him with the bloody cutlass under his arm, which he was binding round with his handkerchief to prevent the blood, with which he now found his coat sleeve drenched, from staining his Lordship's carpet. " I am " sorry for that: what is it?"—" No- " thing, my Lord," replied he, " but " what I shall find at the next town, in " the skill of a surgeon; I am bleed- " ing: your Lordship will permit me " to leave you."—" No, no; let me " send for my surgeon from Warwick."

—"By no means, my Lord, I have a "friend waiting at Burford for me, and I "ſhall ſooner have the aſſiſtance I need by "going."—"Well! do ſo; go, and when "the wound is dreſſed come back, and "think how I may make you a return." Edmund gently bowed, and was retiring. "Leave the cutlaſs," ſaid Lord Sudley, "it may lead to a diſcovery of the vil-"lains." As he received the weapon with the trembling hand of an exhauſted rake, he aſked the name of the youth. Willing that Lord Sudley ſhould ſuppoſe that he had been ſaved by the ſon of Miſs Melvil's reſcuer, Edmund evaded a direct reply; and, ſaying that he had left it with his Lordſhip's ſteward, requeſted to know the way to the hall. Lord Sudley then rang the bell violently, and, ordering the footman who appeared, to ſend his butler and houſekeeper to him, ſuffered Edmund to depart,

part, repeating, " think of what I ſaid, " and let me ſee you again."

Edmund found Arthur ready and wondering at his ſtay: the ſteward was gone to Warwick. Having related his adventure, to the aſtoniſhment of his friend, they made the beſt of their way to Stratford, where Edmund had his wounds examined by a ſkilful ſurgeon. Beſides the one upon the arm, he had received another acroſs the ſhoulder; neither of them were dangerous; but from that on the arm he had loſt a conſiderable quantity of blood, and was in conſequence adviſed to ſtop a day or two before he proceeded. Nothing particular occurred during the reſt of the journey of the two friends. Edmund's thoughts, in ſpite of all his endeavours to the contrary, fondly ſtrayed to Leiceſterſhire; and he was at Mariton when he arrived at Melford. Cowper and his ſiſter received

received Arthur as if he had been their ſon, and Miſs Smyth immediately recalled to his mind the lovely portrait he had ſo much admired at Sudley Caſtle.

CHAP

CHAPTER XLI.

Mariton. Aubrey's firſt Expences. The Apparitions of the Caſtle ſeen at the Parſonage. Hue and Cry after them. Emily receives Propoſals of Marriage from two of her Lovers. Her Converſation with Aubrey.

At Mariton there happened no adventures, no uncommon occurrences; tranquillity and the accuſtomed chearfulneſs of the Aubreys reigned at the parſonage. Reading, painting, muſic, and hoſpitality filled the time. Emily ſtudied, played, ſung, and thought of Arthur and Edmund as her elder brothers both. Arthurina and Arthur-William improved under the inſtructions of Senſitive, who was more delighted to inſtruct

inſtruct than he had ever been to learn; and Aubrey and the lovely partner of his boſom, while they enjoyed the ſcenes before them, endeavoured to conſole each other for Arthur's errors with the hope that he would ſee the folly of ſhutting up his heart from them, as well as view with horror the guilt of his intrigue.

Having reſolved to pay their bills quarterly, that they might have a view of their expences continually under their eye, they had contemplated with ſome alarm the total of the midſummer quarter, which diminiſhed the ſum that had been lodged in the banker's hands conſiderably more than a half, ſo that there did not remain quite ſeven hundred pounds with him. But then in this total were included not only their expences at Mariton, but thoſe of their journey down, and of their luggage by the wag-

gon,

gon, the furniture bought of Mr. Dodſon, the gig and the horſe, and their ſtock of liquors which was not half conſumed. The remainder of his fund, and the ſtipend from the curacy were all they had to live upon during the life of their worthy friend the Doctor; but they relied on the approaching quarter being nothing like the foregoing one, and truſted that their economy would enable them to meet every exigency.

The talk and dread of the ghoſts at the Caſtle ſtill prevailed, and neither ridicule nor ſerious admonition could cure the country people of their prejudice. It was ſaid that they appeared more frequently than ever, and had been poſitively obſerved by ſeveral perſons ſkipping in fire on the walls. One evening, at the end of the week in which Arthur and Edmund left Mariton, about midnight, juſt as the family were going

to

to retire, Cæsar came into the room in a great hurry, calling to Aubrey—"Massa, "Massa, come see ghost." This created a general laugh. "What!" cried Aubrey, "Cæsar see ghosts too?"—"Massa!" said Cæsar, smiling, "come "see yourself."—"Let us all go," cried Mrs. Aubrey; and accordingly the whole family went with him into the garden. The night was serene, but dark; and nothing was plainly visible beyond the bounds of their own domains. In vain they looked towards the Castle; it presented only a deeper black without peculiar form. For some time they watched the quarter where the appearances were expected, till at length they grew tired, and again laughing at the force of Cæsar's imagination, returned to the door, when a light was seen proceeding from the Castle. Presently the light appeared at the windows, as if the interior

interior were illuminated. Blue flames now ran along the parapet in various directions: at one of the windows a figure in white garments was seen forcing over another figure which was black, and, at the distance from the parsonage, not unlike what is usually painted for the devil. It sprang forward, and, precipitating to the ground, vanished in a flash of fire. All was immediately darkness, and, in the obscurity of the sky, not a trace remained of what had occurred. From the first appearance of the light to the vanishing of the black figure, not more time than ten minutes elapsed.

Aubrey, satisfied that this show was either the foolish amusement of some rash and inconsiderate people, or the device of roguery, proposed to Sensitive to go up to the Castle without a moment's loss of time, and endeavour to make some discovery. To this Sensitive

ſitive agreed; but Mrs. Aubrey and the girls entreated them earneſtly not to go: for, however Aubrey might defy the devil and all his works, he was not ſo well ſkilled in the defiance of the works of his imps in the human form. It was impoſſible to ſay for what purpoſe theſe tricks were played, or with what force they were protected. "But my love," ſaid Aubrey, "we will take Cæſar and "Charles's man, Joe, with us, and muſ- "ter auxiliaries in the village: we will "get Rowley, the Spicers, and ſome of "the villagers, I warrant you, beſides "the conſtables."—"I think there can "be no danger," ſaid Senſitive, "and "it is really a matter of great impor- "tance that theſe manœuvres ſhould be "put an end to, whether they are "merely ſilly pranks or the cloak of "villany." On their promiſing to go armed, and in a large body, Mrs. Aubrey,

brey, Emily, and Arthurina yielded to the perſuaſions of Aubrey, notwithſtanding their fears; and the gentlemen ſallied forth attended by their ſervants: the latter were ſent to awake ſome of the ſtouteſt of the villagers, while Aubrey and Senſitive recruited at the houſes of their acquaintance. Col. Spicer had arrived that very evening from town, and, with his father and brother joined the party, which was ſtrengthened with Mr. Rowley and ſeveral other gentlemen. Among the village hinds Cæſar and Joe had but little ſucceſs: on two only could they prevail to leave their beds: they all declared that they were not afraid to turn out and fight like men with men, but begged to be excuſed attacking ghoſts and devils. The party thought themſelves ſufficiently ſtrong without them; and, armed with guns, piſtols, and ſwords, made the utmoſt

expedition

expedition to the Caſtle. They met no one in their way; and when they arrived on the ſpot all was ſilence. They went through the deſerted chambers of the Caſtle; they ſtood liſtening in all directions: not a ſound was heard but that of the wary buz of their own whiſpers, or of their cautious treading as they moved from place to place. No veſtige of the white ghoſt or of the black devil remained; not even the ſlighteſt ſmell of ſulphur from the flame in which the latter vaniſhed. The party walked every where over the ſcite on which the Caſtle ſtood; ſeveral of them aſcended the turrets in ſpite of the darkneſs that reigned on the ſtair-caſes: they wandered from point to point, went through the lanes of the adjacent country, and called up the people at every houſe to inquire if they had ſeen or heard any thing ſtirring in the courſe of the night. In vain; nothing

nothing was learned that could lead to the detection of the persons concerned in the trick; and, after wandering about till day-light enabled them to examine the scene more minutely, they returned home disappointed and wondering at the ease and dexterity with which their search had been eluded. The fact, however, being fully ascertained, the gentlemen of the country were determined if possible to discover the cause of it. The next day another visit was paid to the Castle and its environs, with as little success as the former: the circumstance was made known at Loughborough, and all the neighbouring towns and villages; advertisements were stuck up threatening the actors in the affair with prosecution, and offering a reward for their apprehension; proper persons were hired to watch at night and give immediate notice of any fresh appearance: in short, such

ſuch a train was laid for the diſcovery of the ghoſts that their ſpiritſhips became indignant, and made themſelves ſcarce.

Meanwhile the parſonage was haunted by a figure much more terrible to Emily than all the phantoms imagination could conjure up; Colonel Spicer became more and more aſſiduous in his attentions to her. Into whatever company ſhe went ſhe was ſure to find him one of the party; wherever ſhe walked, he followed her; and his arch eye, faſcinated by her beauty, was for ever fixed upon her. This attendance was extremely painful to the lovely girl; and ſhe longed for a regular declaration of his paſſion, that ſhe might have an opportunity of relieving herſelf from it. One day, after ſinging for him, while Arthurina was painting with Senſitive, ſhe reſolved to give him a fair opportunity; and, riſing

from

from the piano, said she wanted a little air, and walked into the garden. This encouragement was not wanting to embolden the gallant Colonel, who entertained no doubt of the success of his declaration when he chose to make it, for he conceived his person to be irresistible; but in spite of the flame kindled by the charms of Emily, he had been in the habit of ridiculing matrimony, had had reasons to consider the breach of its vows as a common consequence of making them, and had always thought the risk such as no man of sense would run. When first inspired with this passion, he did not scruple to hope the attainment of its object, without purchasing it so dearly as with the loss of liberty; but when he became more acquainted with the Aubreys, and observed the gaiety of the girls shielded by that virtuous reserve which impurity could never

attack, he was convinced that there was no alternative but that of making Emily his wife. At times he thought it beſt to relinquiſh her altogether; but, in the ſtudy of commanding, he had never entered upon that of ſelf-command. A regiment of warriors obeyed him at a word; but whenever deſire aroſe in his heart, inſtead of leading he was led; inſtead of commanding, he obeyed. Accordingly, giving reins to imagination, he had ſeized every opportunity of indulging himſelf in the company of its idol, and accumulated excitement bore away all ſcruples before it.

He attended her into the garden: ſhe led to the very ſpot where ſhe had freely converſed with her mother on Edmund, her brother Edmund, and where ſhe intended to diſmiſs her Colonel. "This is a pleaſant arbour," ſaid Col. Spicer, as they approached, "the

" the prospect from it never fails to
" present new attractions: will Miss
" Aubrey sit here and enjoy the air?'
—" With all my heart, Colonel:" said Emily, entering and seating herself. He followed, and stood before her, fixing his arch eye on her with a double archness, which was designed to express what was passing in his mind. After a short pause in this attitude, he attempted to take her hand, which she withdrew. " Nay," said he, " do not refuse me the happi-
" ness of pressing your hand, while I lay
" my heart at your feet. I adore you
" above all women."—" Colonel Spi-
" cer!" said Emily, " What do you
" mean?"—" To tell you," replied he,
" that I love you to distraction, and that
" there is not any thing I will not do to
" make you happy."—" Sir, this is lan-
" guage to which I am not accustomed;
" and I assure you it is by no means

" agreeable to me."—" Underſtand me, " my dear Miſs Aubrey, before you ſay it " is not agreeable to you. Upon my ſoul " I do not mean to trifle with you. You " are a moſt lovely creature; and when " I ſay that I love you, I mean to offer " you my hand." Emily, diſguſted with this piece of vanity, aſſumed an air of dignified pride, and ſaid: " Offer! " Sir! If ever I condeſcend to think of " any man as a lover, he ſhall ſolicit my " hand, not offer his."—" Oh! you " proud creature!" exclaimed the Colonel, reinforcing the archneſs of his eye with a twiſt of his lips: " but, my dear " girl, make allowance for a ſoldier. " You remember how Henry the fifth " courted the Princeſs Catherine: it was " Kate, will you marry me?' So I ſay, " Emily! will you marry me?"—" I " proteſt," ſaid Emily, ſmiling, " I do " not ſee where the compariſon lies: " but

" but as I will not suppose that Colonel " Spicer means to jest on such a subject, " I must beg him to desist." Col. Spicer had too favourable an opinion of his person and pretensions to believe this answer sincere; and he naturally enough ascribed it to the usual artifice of the sex, who love to be courted. He therefore resolved to address her with the fire of an ardent lover; and, falling on his knee, again seized her hand: " Never, never, " will I desist, oh loveliest of women," cried he, " till you consent to make me " the happiest of men. Charming Emily, " my heart adores you: for mercy's sake " give me one encouraging look. Nay, " struggle not to rob me of this heavenly " prize; it must, it shall be mine:" saying which he forced her hand to his lips, and, in spite of her endeavours to rescue it from his gripe, imprinted several kisses on it. " Sir, said Emily, blushing as

ſhe roſe and left the arbour, "having "requeſted you in vain to deſiſt, I am at "a loſs what to ſay, or how to act, but "my father will inſtruct me." This the Colonel interpreted into a declaration in his favour, and, leering with his wonted archneſs, accompanied her back to the houſe, determined to take the hint of making a regular propoſal to Aubrey.

An opportunity occurred that very morning; for Emily on going in having retired to her own chamber, Col. Spicer ſtood lounging at the garden door of the ſitting-room, where the painters were ſtill occupied in their ſtudies, and Aubrey coming in ſhortly after, the Colonel invited him to a ſtroll in the garden. Having formally made his propoſal, he ſtared at Aubrey with a conſcious ſmile, raiſing the brow of his right eye, and diminiſhing the ſight of the left one, betokening his ſenſe of the delight he had given.

given. Prepared by his own obſervation, as well as by his converſations with Mrs. Aubrey for ſuch a propoſal, Aubrey received it with a complacent ſmile, thanked the Colonel for the honour he did his daughter, and ſaid he would conſult her without delay on the ſubject. "I thought "it very amiable in her," ſaid Col. Spicer, "that ſhe referred me to you, and would "not give me an anſwer without your "conſent. Now moſt girls are delighted "to encourage lovers without the know-"ledge of their parents."—"Not moſt, "I hope, Colonel," replied Aubrey, "ſince it would be giving good grounds "to ſuſpect, after marriage, that they "would encourage admirers without the "knowledge of their huſbands."—"Faith! I believe you are right," cried the Colonel; "and if there is any de-"pendence to be placed upon the mar-"rige vow, it muſt be among thoſe who

" have in the first instance been true to " the ties of nature. Emily is the girl " for me: no other on earth should " tempt me to marry."—" Let her " marry when she may," replied her father, " it will not, I think, be her fault " if her husband be not happy." He then promised to inform Col. Spicer of the result of his conversation with Emily in a day or two, and the Colonel took his leave.

Aubrey was surprised to hear that Emily had referred her lover to him, as it was in a certain degree giving him encouragement; he wished she had not done it, being perfectly satisfied that it was not her intention; and he was not displeased to learn from her that the idea of reference was the suggestion of the Colonel's vanity, for that she had purposely given him an opportunity to speak, that she might get rid of his ridiculous atten-

attentions. "My dear Emily," said Aubrey, "you have often heard me "express my sentiments generally on "marriage; I have now to speak of it "particularly as it relates to yourself. "My affection for you leads me to wish "that we may be together as long as I "live; and I am certain that if you "marry a man according to your own "taste, my wish will be gratified: the "man on whom you can bestow the af- "fection of a wife cannot fail to make "me love him as a son; and your giving "him your hand will but strengthen our "union. To such a man it would be "real happiness to see you united; but "where is he to be found? Not cer- "tainly in Colonel Spicer! I know it, "my love, and such good fortune is "hardly to be expected. But if the "bliss which our hearts aim at is not "attainable, we ought not to refuse con-

" ſideration to motives leſs exquiſite in
" their influence. I put Colonel Spi-
" cer out of the queſtion; but, ſhould
" your hand be ſolicited by one poſſeſſed
" of good nature, virtue, and an indepen-
" dent fortune, I could form a hope, my
" Emily, that you would not deſpiſe that
" plain happineſs which reſults from the
" diſcharge of domeſtic duties. You re-
" member that I have always endea-
" voured to impreſs upon you the ne-
" ceſſity of moderating expectation, to
" look forward to the end of your life,
" however long or ſhort it may be, and
" to place your hope of happineſs on the
" rectitude of your mind, and the utility
" of your exiſtence. It is one thing to
" marry a man who does not merit your
" love, and another to accept of one who
" has not excited admiration. It fre-
" quently happens, that by intercourſe
" we come to love thoſe who at firſt ap-

" pear

" pear not ſo attractive as thoſe we ad-
" mire; and not rarely diſlike the ob-
" jects of our readier prepoſſeſſions. In
" the choice of a huſband therefore, my
" dear Emily, if the heart of a young
" woman be diſengaged, I think ſhe
" would not do wrong to enter upon the
" marriage ſtate with the mild, ſober
" views of tranquil hope, domeſtic vir-
" tue, and religious faith. I ſay, my
" love, that it would perhaps appear in
" the end more deſirable than thoſe
" matches which are formed on that ex-
" ceſſive ſenſibility that renders two
" people idols in the eyes of each other,
" abſorbs the faculties, and chains the
" ſoul with paſſion. What think you?"
—" I think," replied Emily, " that a
" woman who had no prior attachment
" would be happy with a good man, and
" would ſoon love him as her huſband;
" yet it would certainly be better if ſhe

" felt a preference for him before ſhe
" married; and ſhe muſt by no means
" have the ſlighteſt prior attachment.
" But to marry Col. Spicer——"—" I
" have told you, my dear girl, that he
" is out of the queſtion—but tell me,
" have you perceived no particular ſigns
" of regard in any other perſon anſwer-
" ing the object of my remarks?"—" No,
" indeed, Papa. Do you ſuppoſe there
" is any ſuch perſon?"—" I do, Emily."
—" Indeed! Then you are miſtaken."
—" Among the young men whom you
" occaſionally ſee here, and at other
" houſes, there is certainly one more
" than commonly partial to you."—
" You can't mean Mr. Rowley, Papa?"
—" You gueſs well at leaſt, my love."
—" Dear me! with all his goodneſs of
" heart and friendly diſpoſition, I dare
" ſay he no more thinks of me as a wife
" than Arthur does of Miſs Spicer."—

" Should

" Should you be miſtaken, Emily; ſhould " he have formed an attachment for you ——" Emily turned pale— " could you " with pleaſure receive his addreſſes?"— " I have no thought of marriage at all— " I prefer a ſingle life—I never can be " ſo happy as with you and Mamma—" —" Rowley, my love, is independent in " his circumſtances, and a good young " man—he lives near us—I know it is " only his diffidence that reſtrains him " from declaring his affection to you— " in ſhort, Emily, he told me ſo." Poor Emily was ready to ſink. " I like Mr. " Rowley very much, but I feel no pre- " ference for him."—" Have you any " objection to him?"—" Only that I " have no preference for him:—yes, " another—he has fortune, and you, my " dear Papa, have it not in your power " to give me a portion."—" A man of " liberal mind, ſuch as Rowley, will look

" for

" for my Emily's portion in her ſoul: " the objection would otherwiſe be un- " anſwerable. But I will urge you no " farther now—take a little time to think " of it—the deciſion muſt be entirely " your own—if it require perſuaſion " from me there is an end to it. I " ſhall never think of inſuring you a " ſupport at the expence of your peace " of mind. I will not at preſent let " Rowley know that I have ſpoken to " you on the ſubject; but as for Col. " Spicer, I will immediately ſend him " our concluſive thanks. You muſt, " however, treat him with great civility " wherever you meet."—" Certainly, " but he is a very diſagreeable creature, " and always looks impudently." Aubrey obſerved, that he would probably now be leſs at Mariton than ever; and Emily moſt devoutly prayed it might be ſo.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XLII.

A Breakfaſt at Spicer-Hall. Another on the ſame Day at the Parſonage. Emily's ſucceſsful Study of Self-command. She argues with herſelf in Favour of Mr. Rowley. Reſult of her Argument. Senſitive appears in a new Light.

PRIDE, from whatever ſtock it ſhoot, from wealth or birth, from arrogated conſequence, or puffed-up vanity, never makes allowance for the feelings of others; but ſwells with rage and reſentment at the ſlighteſt croſſing of its own. The whole Spicer family knew the Colonel's intention to offer himſelf to Emily; they were well founded in the arithmetic of a plum, acquainted with its proceſs in the ſcience of ſociety, and penetrated

penetrated with its buoyant principle: they had learned that Aubrey, though a man of family, had become dependent; and that his daughters had little or no expectations: they took it for granted that young women, in such a situation, were ready to catch at the first common offer; and it never entered their heads that the all-accomplished Bob could possibly be rejected. The Colonel, being the hopes of the family, had no wish which father and mother, brother and sister did not combine to gratify.

When he first made known his serious intentions respecting Emily, Eudoxia thought he might have chosen better; but she soon saw that her brother was swayed by something more powerful than her opinion, and she joined with the rest of her family in fanning his flame. Old Spicer had not only purchased his rank in the army, but given him a great allowance,

ance, and propoſed, whenever he ſettled, to make over to him one of the eſtates he had purchaſed in the country; ſo that not only the man was thought irreſiſtible, but his proſpects moſt tempting. When therefore next morning at breakfaſt a letter from Aubrey was announced, Miſs Eudoxia became playful, and ſtarting up ſnatched it from the footman. The Colonel kept his ſeat with all the ſangfroid of certainty, while his ſiſter held the letter towards him juſt out of his reach. A ſmile of conceit and conſequence ſpread from Mr. Spicer through the whole family to Billy, and was reflected by the muſcles of Goſling. The Colonel's had a mixture of nonchalence, ſupported by regular oſcillations of the head from ſhoulder to ſhoulder; and Eudoxia's had a degree of her own dear brother's archneſs as ſhe waved the letter before him.

"Well

"Well Bob;" ſaid Mr. Spicer, "I "wiſh you happy with her, though I "ſhall always think you mought have "done better in the way of fortune."— "Never mind that, Mr. Spicer," ſaid Mrs. Spicer— "you and ſuch as you "are fit to make fortunes; but Bob and "Miſs Aubrey are born and educated to "enjoy them: ſhe is a very clever "girl."—"And pray," ſaid Spicer, "which were you? fit to make, or born "and educated to enjoy a fortune?"— "That brutiſh ſpeech ſhan't prevent my "enjoying Bob's felicity," ſaid Mrs. Spicer, looking emphatically at Goſling. "Read, read, my charming Miſs Spicer," ſaid Goſling. "What! open Bob's "letter of love, and life, and joy, and-— "Shall I Bob?" pretending to break the ſeal—"She certainly is handſomer "than I thought ſhe was—I ſay, ſhall "I?"—"Do, Eudoxia," replied he, grinning;

grinning; "you read well."—"Oh! "I'll mind my ſtops and emphaſes:" ſaying which, ſhe opened the letter and began to read: "*Dear Colonel!*"—"Eudoxia!" ſaid Mr. Spicer, interrupting her, "always begin a letter by "reading the name at the bottom of it; "then go to the date, whether that's at "top or bottom."—"Lord, Mr. Spi-"cer," cried Mrs. Spicer, "hold your "tongue, if you can't ſay any thing to "the purpoſe. Go on, Eudoxia."—"*Dear Colonel!*"—"Who is the letter "from?" ſaid Mr. Spicer. "It is "ſigned, *William Aubrey*, Sir;" replied Eudoxia. "To be ſure—" ſaid Mrs. Spicer—"do you think that Miſs Au-"brey would begin, *Dear Colonel?*"—"No, but her brother mought."—"Mought!" cried Mrs. Spicer—"he "mought, mought he, in Glouſter-"ſhire?"—"I'll not bear this, Mrs. "Spicer,"

" Spicer," ſaid her huſband: " I'll—"
—" Pray, Sir, hear the letter."—" I
" will, Bob, but—— read Eudoxia."—
" *Dear Colonel! Your good opinion of my*
" *daughter, and the honour you do us*
" *all, in propoſing an alliance, you cannot*
" *but be ſenſible are highly flattering——*"
—" How well expreſſed that ſentence
" is!" ſaid Mrs. Spicer, looking em-
phatically at Goſling, who ſmiled his
ſympathy, and gently nodded his re-
ply.—Eudoxia continued: " *Pray accept*
" *my thanks——*"—" There's ſome gra-
" titude in that," ſaid Mr. Spicer. Eu-
doxia went on—" *Your fortune, your*
" *rank; indeed in every reſpect you know*
" *yourſelf to be unexceptionable.——*"—
" I always liked Aubrey," ſaid the Colo-
nel: " I ſhall certainly treat him through
" life with the reſpect due to a father."—
Eudoxia read on—" *Miſs Aubrey feels as*
" *ſhe ought on this occaſion,——*"—" Oh,
" the

" the lovely girl! exclaimed the Colonel, in extacy.—" *And, ſuperior,*" continued Eudoxia, reading, " *to the petty delight of* " *trifling with the admiration of any man,* " *ſhe has requeſted me unequivocally to de-* " *clare to you that*—"—" What's this?" cried Miſs Spicer, reddening—" *That*—" —" I can't believe my eyes,"—" *That* " *ſhe declines your addreſſes.*"

The faces of the Spicer-group underwent a very ſudden alteration: the ſmile of conceit and conſequence fled, and made way for frowns, rage, and all the marks of mortified pride and diſappointment. The Colonel thought his ſiſter had jokingly put her own words for Aubrey's, and deſired her not to jeſt. " Jeſt!" cried Eudoxia: " I ſhall burſt " —An Aubrey refuſe a Spicer! A beg- " gar refuſe a coach!"—" Is it poſſible?" cried Mr. Spicer: " The daughter of " the curate of Mariton refuſe my ſon!

" You

" You deſerve it, Bob, for thinking of a " paltry baby not worth a ſhilling—but " let her go—let her rot on a dunghill." —" Always vulgar, or it would not be " you, Mr. Spicer;" cried Mrs. Spicer, " yet I could almoſt ſwear myſelf to " think of this weak, ignorant, fooliſh " minx." Goſling agreed with the lady in a ſolemn, ſympathetic look and ſhrug. " And for her father," continued ſhe, " to conſent to her expoſing herſelf, and " to write ſuch nonſenſe!" Aubrey's letter concluded with a few ſoftening expreſſions, which the Spicers had no patience to read; but continued venting their fury in the moſt abuſive terms, and vowing vengeance againſt the whole generation of vipers. Mrs. Spicer ordered her coach, that ſhe might immediately go and expoſe them to all her friends, and inſiſt upon their giving them up. Miſs Spicer determined to find a way

way of ſhowing them the difference. Mr. Spicer ſwore, rolled his eyes, and went about his buſineſs at the Quarter-Seſſions at Loughborough. Billy bethought himſelf of taking a cool practice on his tenor-fiddle; and Mr. Goſling ſympathiſed in Mrs. Spicer's viſits. The Colonel himſelf was the moſt collected under this unheard-of, deſperate affront. Whatever might be the motive of it, he had not the ſlighteſt ſuſpicion of its ariſing from a defect of attractions; and he promiſed himſelf in the courſe of time a very pleaſant revenge, both upon the girl and the parſon.

In a very different manner was the morning ſpent at the parſonage. Aubrey's underſtanding juſtified Emily's refuſal of the Colonel; but at the ſame time he thought it a ſubject on which the greateſt delicacy was to be obſerved. It was mentioned at breakfaſt before

Senſitive;

Senſitive; for he was conſidered a boſom friend; and it was determined that it ſhould not be breathed abroad to a ſingle creature, that not the leaſt notice ſhould be taken of it at the Spicers, and that the Colonel ſhould be received with greater hoſpitality than he had ever been, that he might be the leſs ſenſible of his diſappointment. Before breakfaſt was over, Aubrey received a packet of letters from Arthur and Edmund, which, while they excited aſtoniſhment, diſſipated all his fears for the former, and reſtored to him that perfect complacency of ſoul which had been diſturbed by the account given him by Dr. Murray of his intercourſe with Lady Sudley. Edmund ſaid nothing in his letter of their adventure at Grant's cottage; but, generally, that from circumſtances which had happened on their journey, his friend had been ſo convinced of the worthleſſneſs of the per-

ſon who had enthralled him; that he had voluntarily rejoiced in the opportunity of giving her up; and that it had not been neceſſary for him to uſe Aubrey's knowledge of his ſon's ſecret, as a ſpur to an effort of virtue; for that he had himſelf, unbiaſed, reſolved upon all his father wiſhed. "When at laſt I told "him," ſaid Edmund, "that his ſecret "was known to you, and that you had "commiſſioned me to ſpeak to him on "the ſubject, he expreſſed his ſhame in "the moſt amiable manner; and re-"proached himſelf for his conduct to "you in ſuch terms as increaſed my love "and admiration of him." Edmund dwelled on the praiſe of Arthur, and declared him to be, in his opinion, one of the nobleſt of men; a friend of whom he ſhould ever be proud, and for whom he would ſacrifice life itſelf. The warm effuſions of his pen delighted the whole

circle; Emily not the leaſt. Edmund likewiſe gave a ſhort account of his adventure with Lord Sudley; and expreſſed the pleaſure the arrival of his friend had ſpread through Edenbower. Arthur's letter to his father was couched in the warmeſt terms of gratitude and affection: he confeſſed his error in the moſt ingenuous manner, without caſting much blame on Lady Sudley; and was not behind hand with Edmund in eulogy. He extolled his friend's courage and magnanimity, in the adventure with Lord Sudley; and gave a more particular account of it than Edmund himſelf had done. Beſides his letter to Aubrey, Arthur had written to his mother, to his ſiſters, to Arthur-William. Fond of his family, he had always ſomething particular to ſay to each. In that to Emily, he painted but too warmly, however juſtly, the character of his friend. His

ſiſter,

ſiſter, intent on the regulating of her emotions, had, ever ſince her converſation with her mother, reſolved to conſider Edmund as her brother; but ſuch unbounded praiſe, and ſuch a deſcription as Arthur's of his reſcuing Lord Sudley from the hands of the villains, were adapted to ſhake her plan. She was ſenſible of a too lively impreſſion; and ſhe redoubled her efforts to oppoſe it. In theſe ſhe was aſſiſted by her mother, who frequently converſed with her on her own ſtate when, at the death of her father, ſhe and Mrs. Melvil retired to the Cambridgeſhire Cottage; where ſhe devoted her time to the improvement of her mind, looking forward beyond this world, in which happineſs is ſo uncertain, except as it reſults from a conſciouſneſs of endeavouring to pleaſe that Being who has thought proper to place us here. Emily reaped great advan-

tage from the conſideration of her mother's trials; and was in a ſhort time ſo much miſtreſs of the paſſions and emotions of the mind, that ſhe could rely upon her ſtrength in making them yield obedience to reaſon.

While this amiable girl was thus perfecting herſelf in the practice of ſelf-command, her refuſal of Colonel Spicer became the ſubject of converſation in every company: moſt people were ſurpriſed that Aubrey ſhould ſuffer a daughter to be guilty of ſuch folly; and ſome formed a ſtrong party with Mrs. Spicer to make the family know themſelves. Readineſs of inquiry was ſuperſeded by formality of ſalutation; to this ſucceeded frowns; rude laughter was next in rotation; and at length the very church was forſaken by the party, and the Divinity was not worſhipped becauſe the daughter of the Curate had declined the addreſſes

of

of Colonel Spicer. Such is the progreſs of the paſſions in ſome boſoms.

When it was fully aſcertained that Emily's heart was untouched by the gay and gallant Colonel, a man far more deſerving of her, one whom ſhe highly reſpected, Rowley, the good, the gentle Rowley, ſummoned greater courage, dared to hope, and even to ſhow his hope by aſſiduities from which he had hitherto abſtained. Emily, convinced that her acceptance of him would pleaſe her father, endeavoured to perſuade herſelf to act on that principle. She revolved his arguments, recollected that ſhe had aſſented to the doctrine of love after marriage, and confirmed herſelf in it: but when ſhe ſeverely examined her heart, ſhe found, that though ſhe could command the paſſions which aſſailed it, ſhe had not the heart itſelf to beſtow. She could baniſh the thought of Edmund

as a husband; but to him, and only to him could she ever yield the love of a wife. Had she never seen him she would have married Mr. Rowley; but, conscious of the preference he possessed in her bosom, to give her hand to Rówley would be a crime. She resolved to live a single life, and generously to put an end to suspense without delay in the mind of so worthy a young man; she therefore begged Aubrey not to postpone assuring him of her esteem, and of her inability to direct her heart according to his wishes. Aubrey secretly lamented her decision, but attempted not to bias it either by word or look. He well knew that love was never the result of advice; he was satisfied with having formed his child's heart to virtue, and with steering it away from danger; but to urge her to a marriage not freely chosen, or even to induce her to it by her

her affection for himself, far from conceiving it to be the part of a parent, he accounted to be morally a parricide. He softened the answer to Rowley with assurances of his esteem and affection; and Rowley proved himself worthy of those assurances, by resolving to conquer his passion, so that he might not relinquish the enjoyment of the friendship and society of the family. He had, however too much sensibility to render this an easy task; and when he received the message, he bade Aubrey farewell for two years, which he determined to spend in visiting foreign countries. Aubrey applauded and blessed him.

While Emily was thus captivating and refusing lovers, the little god was slily and silently folding a net round a heart for her sister. Arthurina had hitherto been accounted too much a child to engage the attentions of admirers, though

her ſprightlineſs made her the delight of all who knew her. Reared with the ſame principles as her ſiſter, there was no difference between them in the ſolid foundations of character; but in the lighter ſuperſtructure nature had varied their formation, both as to face and imagination. Arthurina, with her dark eyes and volatile nerves, had more of the comic in her than Emily; and ſhe had a vein of mimickry which Aubrey had found ſome difficulty in reſtraining. The acuteneſs of her eye, which ſo readily led her to mark and repreſent the manners of people, found its way to her pencil: ſhe made accurate ſketches from nature, and took ſtriking likeneſſes. In improving this genius, Senſitive unwarily became alive to the charms of his ſcholar. She entertained him with her vivacity; and now and then ventured, even before Aubrey, to take off the oddities of ſome

of

of their acquaintance. She one day told Senſitive a ſtory with grimace, action, and tone ſo exactly ſuited to the characters, that ſhe kept him in a continual laughter, a thing very unuſual with Charles, till ſhe drew him in that ſtate, while he, ſitting oppoſite, ſuppoſed her on a different work. Another time ſhe told him a ſad ſtory, with a very melancholy face, in which the lines of his countenance ſympathiſing, ſhe took him in a doleful air. Senſitive became daily more and more charmed; and, as the time approached when he purpoſed leaving Mariton, he diſcovered that Arthurina had tied him by the heart. He made one or two feeble efforts to diſengage it: he conſidered her in the light of a child, to whom it would be improper to talk of love: and he compared their ages; he was four and twenty, ſhe but fifteen. Theſe conſiderations were very trivial

ones indeed to oppoſe to the power of whoſe influence he was ſenſible. At fifteen, a girl is in her ſixteenth year; and a very ſhort time ſoon removes the impropriety of talking of love: and as to the difference of nine years, it would never be more were they to live a century: the ſeeming diſparity was therefore entirely owing to the early ſtage of her life; at twenty-five and thirty-four there would be no diſparity at all. Love ſoon ſettled theſe points in Senſitive's mind, but did not impel him to act irrationally. He ſtill reſolved to ſay nothing of his paſſion to Arthurina for ſome time to come, but to declare himſelf to Aubrey; and, if he met his approbation, to return to Mariton, and be aſſiduous in the cultivation of his little painter. In conſequence of this reſolution, he took an opportunity, when walking alone with Aubrey, to open his mind to him. "My

" dear friend," ſaid he, " I find I have
" been dangerouſly occupied at Mariton.
" I have eſcaped all the active flirta-
" tions of beauty elſewhere, to be imper-
" ceptibly worked out of my heart here
" by a child. Yes, Aubrey, I feel for
" that little girl of your's what I never
" felt before for any woman;—a deſire
" to unite our fate for life." Aubrey
ſmiled. " She is," ſaid he, a very en-
" gaging and amiable child, my dear
" Charles, and in time will have all the
" qualities neceſſary for a good wife, if
" we don't turn her head by giving her
" too ſoon the thoughts of a huſband."
—" And yet," replied Senſitive, " with
" all her vivacity, ſhe has more judg-
" ment and forethought than many wo-
" men twice her age. May I, Aubrey,
" indulge the thought, and endeavour
" gradually to win her affections? My
" fortune, you know, is competent to
" the comforts of life; and, ſhould I

" be fortunate enough to gain her heart, " I truſt there would be no fear of her " happineſs." Aubrey had not forgotten Mr. Cowper's account of Senſitive's ſituation in reſpect to the ſecurities to which he had given his name; and he had, ever ſince that account, conſidered him rather as a poor than a rich man; but he imagined that he would ſave ſome portion of his property; and Aubrey was not a man to be looking out for rich huſbands for his daughters, whom he had taught to diſtinguiſh what was eſtimable in men, independent of the idea of marriage, in which however he invariably inculcated competence, as an indiſpenſable requiſite. He was delighted with his friend's propoſal, and conſented to it with a rapture hardly inferior to that of Senſitive, on having his hope encouraged by the father of his little conquering artiſt.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XLIII.

Melford. Arthur no Flint. Opens his Heart to Edmund, and leaves Edenbower. Suspicion as to the two Men who attacked Lord Sudley. Arthur arrives at Mariton. Conversation with Aubrey. Time helped forward. Death of the Rector of Mariton.

TIME ambled both at Mariton and Melford; and at the latter place Love was no less busy than at the former. Mr. Cowper, by prudent management, had gradually augmented his little estate; the chief of which consisted of rich pasture lands, whence his cows were enabled to supply the dairy of Edenbower with that produce which not only contributed a comfortable support to the affectionate family

family he had adopted, but annually added ſomething to a ſtore devoted to give in time an independence to Edmund and his ſiſter. A part of the land Mr. Cowper had turned to the uſes of tillage; but this was little more than enough to ſupply himſelf with his own grain. The harveſt of theſe few fields was begun on Edmund's return with Arthur to Melford; and it being likewiſe the caſe in many other ſpots throughout the beautiful vale of Melford, the whole country ſeemed alive. The friends, accompanied by Mr. Cowper, Mrs. Smyth, and Harriet, were conſtantly in the fields. Arthur and Edmund aſſiſted in binding up the ſheaves of corn, in placing them in parcels, in carting them, and in raiſing the mows: the former daily inhaled copious draughts of new health, and, before he had been a

week

week at Melford, was as well as he had ever been in his life.

Prepared by Mr. Cowper's account to admire Melford, Arthur was in no degree disappointed: the country, the village, and the villagers, all answered his description of them, though many years had flowed into the ocean of eternity since Melford was the scene of the events he had related. Old Cowsel, and the venerable Grey, who officiated at the interment of the remains of the once lovely Fanny Ross, were no longer enliveners of the rustic meetings, and preservers of village innocence and piety: they had long since played their part, and left their aged limbs to rest in earth. But another venerable Grey, the nephew of the former, filled the pulpit of Melford, and guarded the transmitted spirit of the rising generation: and another worthy Cowsel existed in Dick, who was father of a large family;

family; and who, seconded by his wife, encreased the little patrimony to which he had succeeded. Susan, once the companion of Fanny Ross, had also long been happily settled with her husband, and had children grown up. The neighbourhood had been encreased by the residence of several families of middling fortunes, and altogether Melford was considerably improved since those days, when Mr. Cowper transformed Mrs. Ross's cot into Edenbower.

Arthur and Edmund were delighted to ramble here as they had done at Mariton, and when they left the harvest fields they extended their excursions in every direction; to Bristol, to Gloceſter, and sometimes, crossing the Severn, to the Cambrian hills, to indulge in the romantic prospects they afforded. The sweet glow of friendship accompanied them wherever they went, and was heightened by conversations

verſations on that bewitching ſubject to which their eſtabliſhed confidence had given full ſcope. No wonder that it ſoon became of mutual importance, when Arthur, almoſt faſcinated by the charms of a picture, found in his friend's ſiſter thoſe charms realized, and animated by a ſoul and intellect formed to ſecure that laſting happineſs which can alone reſult from the union of health of mind and body. Harriet was a lovely girl, tall and well ſhaped, with an expreſſive countenance, good ſenſe, and muſical talents: a combination that convinced Arthur that his heart was not of the flinty nature he had accidentally heard it deſcribed to be; it was as tender as his friend's, when the object of tenderneſs united worth and beauty. Arthur, however, found no encouragement from Cowper, Harriet, or her mother: while kindneſs and affection were fully manifeſted, every degree of

paſſion

paſſion was diſcountenanced and carefully guarded againſt. Harriet was never alone with Arthur, and her uncle both in general diſcourſe and in friendly admonitions, ſeemingly unpremeditated, perſuaded his young friend to ſhield his heart againſt the ſofter emotions of the mind, as they only unfitted a man who had to ſtruggle through life for the exertions he would find it neceſſary to make. Arthur therefore had no reſource but in confeſſing to Edmund, and talking with him of their ſiſters. Reflexion taught him that he had even leſs pretenſions than his friend to think of marriage: he had fallen from ſplendid hopes to the neceſſity of chooſing a profeſſion, and that profeſſion was yet to be learned; Smyth deſerted at his birth and without proſpects, as he grew up, was daily riſing to independence. If Edmund therefore were right in attempting to conquer his love,

love, how much more was it incumbent upon him to ſmother his. After ſpeaking one day with rapture of Harriet, he concluded with telling Edmund, that he was certain the warmth of his attachment would not be pleaſing to his uncle, and that though he ſhould continue to love her as long as he lived, he would never open his lips upon the ſubject to any one of the family but Edmund himſelf, unleſs circumſtances turned out ſufficiently favourable to convince him that a propoſal from him would not be heard with pain. "We are unfortunate fellows, my dear "Arthur," ſaid Edmund; "I plainly "ſee that an acknowledgment of the "feelings of either of us would create "unhappineſs to our deareſt friends; let "us therefore ſuppreſs, or at leaſt con-"ceal them for the preſent from all but "ourſelves. When you return to Ma-"riton, talk often of me and kindly to

"Miſs

" Miſs Aubrey without betraying my " paſſion to her. I on my part will " make you the ſubject of converſation " with Harriet, and ſhe ſhall not forget " you. Hereafter ſomething may occur " to render our ſilence unneceſſary, and " we ſhall be doubly rewarded for it."— " This, my dear Edmund," replied Arthur, " is a noble reſolution: I will follow " your example as far as I am able, but " I cannot help thinking that ſome for- " tunate though unforeſeen circumſtance " may ariſe from opening my mind to " my father, and it is very probable in " your caſe. As for mine, he loves me " ſo well that I am ſure whatever he could " do to make me happy would be done, " and if he adviſes me to relinquiſh all " hope of Miſs Smyth his confidence " and friendſhip will be a great ſupport " to my heart." Thus did theſe ingenuous young men, ſafe from the corrupt examples

examples of profligate aſſociates, conſole each other and render themſelves worthy a return of love, by reſolving to ſuppreſs it where it tended to involve the objects of it in diſtreſs. To conceal it, however, from the keen eye of experience was not eaſy, Cowper ſoon detected the ſeeds of a paſſion which in a double ſenſe had been ſo fatal to his own repoſe: he pointed them out to his ſiſter, and at the ſame time the neceſſity of not ſuffering them to take root. To this they paid the greateſt attention, and from the cheerfulneſs of Arthur, who in a guiltleſs attachment felt no cauſes of melancholy, and from Edmund's prudence, they flattered themſelves that they were ſucceſsful. Harriet too, whoſe early leſſons had been no leſs impreſſed than Emily's, diſplayed an affectionate kindneſs for Arthur without diſcovering to him any mark of ſuch an attachment as might ſerve to keep alive

alive a flame of which her mother and uncle were afraid.

After ſpending three weeks happily at Melford, Arthur took leave of Edenbower, delighted with the time he had ſpent there, and poſſeſſing all the love and eſteem he deſerved. Mr. Cowper and Edmund accompanied him as far as Gloceſter. At Warwick he viſited his friends, and heard that Lord Sudley attributed to him his reſcue from the aſſaſſins who attempted his life, aſcribing Edmund's reference for his name to the ſteward as a point of delicacy on the part of Arthur. The two men who attacked him had not been diſcovered, but were ſuſpected to be the father and brother of a girl who having been induced by bribery the year before, to ſacrifice her virtue to Lord Sudley, had died of ſhame and grief. Her brother had come from a diſtant part of England, to ſpend a little

a little time with his friends, had dropped ſome threatning words, and the very morning of the attack, he ſet out to return to his pariſh, accompanied by his father. Arthur himſelf thought this very likely; and in talking of the affair, took pains to give Edmund all the praiſe of the brave action by which Lord Sudley had been ſaved; neither at Warwick nor Coventry, did he hear any thing of Lady Sudley, and he arrived ſafe at the Parſonage, glowing with renovated health and family affection. His reception was delightful to his heart: Aubrey and his mother did not appear to know that he had ever fallen into error, and their joy on beholding his healthy looks and unclouded countenance, was a lively pledge of their undiminiſhed love. His ſiſters and Arthur William preſſed him in their arms, and Senſitive ſhook him cordially by the hand. He was informed

ed of all that had paſſed at Mariton in his abſence, and he recounted the pleaſures he had enjoyed at Melford, fondly dwelling on the virtues of his friend Edmund, and on the lovelineſs of his ſiſter. Senſitive's ſketches of the country, and the likeneſſes he had taken of the family gratified him highly, and he was himſelf ſoon added to the group. Charles ſtaid at the Parſonage full ten days after his arrival, made him his friend, and declared to him his intentions reſpecting Arthurina, if in the courſe of his next viſit he had reaſon to believe ſhe would be happy with him. Arthur was made aware of the alteration that had taken place among ſome of his acquaintance, in conſequence of Emily's declining Colonel Spicer's addreſſes, and it was not long before he perceived it himſelf; but as the ſupporters of the Spicer animoſity were not the moſt ſelect of

the

the inhabitants, he eaſily concurred with the reſt of his family in bearing the mortification ſtoically. The Colonel himſelf, holding it beneath him to ſhew any anger on the occaſion, had ſet out ſoon after for London, leaving his mother and ſiſter to frown down the Aubreys, but unhappily for thoſe two accompliſhed ladies, the ſad effects of their ire were felt only at Spicer-Hall. At the parſonage, new happineſs poured in with Arthur's return in perfect health, and it was only interrupted by the departure of the amiable Charles Senſitive, who, however, promiſed to pay Mariton another viſit ere long.

The very morning that he left them, Arthur had a converſation with Aubrey, on all that had paſſed in his mind previous to his ſickneſs, and ſince his recovery. His father expatiated with warmth on the nature of criminal attachments gene-

rally, but with mildneſs on that of which he had repented. When Arthur avowed his attachment to Edmund's ſiſter, Aubrey, far from repreſſing it, anxiouſly aſſured him that nothing could give him greater ſatisfaction than to ſee them united, at the ſame time, he applauded his reſolution in forbearing to ſpeak of his feelings to Miſs Smyth. "Competence "you know, my dear Arthur," ſaid he, "is indiſpenſable to a happy marriage; "but whether that competence ariſe "from patrimonial fortune, or from "induſtry, is perhaps of little importance. "The far greater part of mankind ſup- "port their families by the latter. With "your education and the ſentiments you "have imbibed, a mode of living becomes "neceſſary, which alters the nature of "competence. The induſtry that will "ſupply the wants of animal exiſtence, "will not afford that maintenance to th

"mind

" mind which no gentleman can diſpenſe
" with in the rearing of a family, and
" whoſe means therefore muſt reach
" beyond the proviſion of *meat, fire, and*
" *clothes*. The intellectual neceſſaries of
" life, however, fortunately require no
" great extenſion of the idea of compe-
" tence; all that is requiſite to inform
" the underſtanding and refine the ſoul,
" may be obtained within almoſt as nar-
" row a compaſs as the common comforts
" of phyſical exiſtence; it is only the
" gratification of unlimited paſſions that
" demands a fund of wealth. For a
" ſingle man much leſs is required than
" for a family. You have not this
" competence, Arthur; neither has Miſs
" Smyth, and yet I do not bid you reſign
" all hope of a union: becauſe, having
" youth and abilities in your favour, you
" may, by ſucceſs in a profeſſion, attain
" a ſufficient income to juſtify your

" marriage; but this is all the encourage-
" ment I can give you. Determine ſoon
" on ſome employment; be patient, and
" reſolve nobly not to entangle the ob-
" ject of your affection in a fruitleſs
" paſſion; be ſilent on the ſubject to
" her, till you are certain of maintaining
" her with comfort."—" Oh, Sir," ſaid
Arthur, " you are ſo good, ſo indulgent,
" there is no exertion I will not make
" to convince you of its being the firſt
" deſire of my mind to be worthy of
" you: but it is a long time to look for-
" ward before my ability to maintain
" her can be aſcertained, and in the
" mean time I may loſe her."—" It is a
" hazard you muſt run to be worthy of
" her," replied Aubrey, " but you are
" both young, and your minds are pro-
" bably ſo congenial, that without any
" formal contract you need not deſpair of
" being happy. At all events, it is ab-
" ſolutely

" ſolutely neceſſary, that you ſhould bend " your mind on ſtudies that may enable " you to enſure the competence on " which your hopes depend: do this, " my dear boy, and leave the reſt to " Providence." Arthur declared his firm reſolution to follow Aubrey's advice, and then in the moſt delicate and anxious manner, he communicated his diſcovery of his friend Edmund's paſſion for Emily, and ſtrongly pleaded with his father to be propitious to it, and to endeavour to ſettle an alliance with Mr. Cowper. " Edmund, my dear Sir," ſaid he, " is " already poſſeſſed of the power of in- " ſuring a competence. Beſides a fund " of learning and information ſuperior " to thoſe of moſt young men of the " firſt families, he has attained a degree " of practical knowledge of agriculture, " that will enable him to undertake the " management of cattle and land, and

" as ſoon as his uncle ſettles him,
" there is not a doubt that he will thrive."
—" This is true," ſaid Aubrey, " but
" conſider that Edmund has already a
" family to ſupport. Cowper's circum-
" ſtances are limited, that is to ſay,
" though by his prudence and perſeve-
" rance rendered equal to the mainte-
" nance of the preſent number he ſup-
" ports, by no means adequate to the
" burden of an additional family: he will
" therefore juſtly, in gradually placing
" his nephew in his own ſhoes, expect of
" him the ſupport of Mrs. and Miſs Smyth
" before every other conſideration. I
" know not any man I ſhould prefer for
" Emily's huſband, and I am not without
" a ſuſpicion that ſhe is of my mind, as
" ſhe refuſed Rowley, who is in every
" reſpect unexceptionable: but then ſhe
" hardly knows it herſelf, for I am ſure
" that ſhe would, like you, communicate

" all

" all her ſentiments: beſides, ſhe is too
" ſenſible, to be led by her heart in an af-
" fection of this nature, before ſhe is con-
" vinced that ſhe is firſt the object of it.
" I will candidly tell you my ſentiments:
" this double alliance would make me
" happy; but I do not think it eaſily at-
" tainable, at leaſt for years to come. On
" the one hand, you muſt be maſter of a
" profeſſion; and on the other, I muſt
" be able to add ſomething to Edmund's
" farm for Emily. But you have all
" youth on your ſide, and I ſee nothing
" impoſſible in effecting it hereafter.
" You muſt be diligent, and I, when
" preſented to the Rectory, will not be
" very ſlow in ſaving a portion for our be-
" loved Emily: all I aſk is patience and
" prudence; that you will do nothing in a
" hurry, and nothing at all that will lay a
" foundation for repentance. Be, for the
" preſent, friends as much, and lovers as

" little as poſſible, and, as I ſaid before, " leave the reſult to Providence: many " things may occur to accelerate our " wiſhes, and if it ſhould be ultimately ne- " ceſſary to relinquiſh them, there will be " no engagements to enthral and perplex " us, and render misfortune ſtill more " calamitous."—" Your ſentiments, my " dear father," ſaid Arthur, " are ſo juſt, " and expreſſed ſo kindly, that to oppoſe " them would be inſanity or inſenſibility. " As for me, I fully reſign myſelf to " your guidance, I will follow your ad- " vice, be my lot what it may: but I " know that Edmund with all his deter- " mination to do and ſay nothing that " can tend to create uneaſineſs to you " or his uncle, will lead a miſerable life, " unleſs he has a hope of making Emily " his own."—" I ſhould be afraid," replied Aubrey, " to give him encou- " ragement, and it is impoſſible but

" through

" through Mr. Cowper: the beſt, there-
" fore, we can do at preſent is, to let
" matters remain as they are." Arthur aſſented; and the father and ſon, with the delightful feelings reſulting from candour and love, joined their beloved group.

When Senſitive left Mariton the ſeaſon was far advanced, and the commencing fall of leaves proclaimed the approach of winter. In ſpite of the indignant family of the rejected Colonel, the hoſpitality prevailing at the Parſonage, and the perſonal attractions of the Aubreys, drew together many large, ſocial parties; and even ſome of thoſe who firſt eſpouſed the reſentment of the Spicers appeared to forget the part they had taken, and were well received. Nothing remarkable occurred during the winter: Arthur proſecuted his ſtudies with unuſual perſeverance; the friend-

ſhip with Cowper and the Smyths was maintained by pleaſing correſpondence, and all mention of love was abſtained from. Unfortunately the bills brought in for the expences of the family were not diminiſhed; and the Aubreys again reſolved to diſcover where they erred, and to make thoſe retrenchments that were abſolutely neceſſary: for the rate at which they were now living was not even leſs than they would be entitled to do were Aubrey actually the rector of the pariſh. The hoſpitality which diſtinguiſhed the Parſonage had exhauſted the ſtock in the cellar; and it was determined that ſome plan ſhould be adopted to diminiſh the conſumption of ſuch expenſive articles; but certainly Chriſtmas, when general feſtivities prevailed over the country, was not the time to deliberate either on that plan, or the means of putting it into execution; therefore, a

ſtore

ſtore ſimilar to the former was ordered for the preſent, and the diſcuſſion of the cellar plan was adjourned till the ſpring. This freſh ſupply was put in upon credit, as Aubrey had drawn the greater part of the remaining ſeven hundred pounds out of the hands of his banker, to diſcharge the Michaelmas bills and ſome extra accounts which had not been foreſeen. The taking of credit was at firſt attended with painful reflexions, but then Aubrey had been hitherto a good cuſtomer, and ſhould he be under the neceſſity of living a year or even two on credit, it would be no injury to the perſon with whom he dealt; for, beſides his paſt punctuality in large payments, he could always make amends by an addition of intereſt, and future favours, when his ſituation enabled him. The whole winter was ſpent agreeably, and perhaps not the leſs ſo, that the Spicers were the greater part of

it in London. The village was not troubled by the Caſtle ghoſts, which had deſiſted from appearing, ever ſince the hue and cry that was made after them, but the villagers never forgot the apparitions, and the Caſtle ſeldom had viſitors. Several trips were made to Leiceſter on invitations from Dr. Searle, in whom the Aubreys, every viſit, obſerved an evident decreaſe of bodily ſtrength as well as mental failure, nor did the proſpect of the rectory diminiſh their ſorrow for his decay, becauſe they loved, admired, and venerated him.

When they took leave of him, after ſpending a week at his houſe in the beginning of March, they ſuſpected that they ſhould ſee him no more, and were not ſurpriſed towards the end of the month, at Aubrey's receiving a letter from Mrs. Searle, informing him of the approach of his diſſolution, and that he wiſhed

wiſhed to ſee him. Aubrey repaired to the Newark without delay, and found the worthy old man on the eve of his departure from this world. He was ſitting on an eaſy-chair in his bed-room, and received Aubrey with a ſmile. He perfectly recollected his friends, and was fully conſcious of the awful change he was about to make. "This indeed is "friendly," ſaid he, taking Aubrey's hand, "I wiſhed to bid you farewell "before I left this world, and I would "have had our friend Cowper meet you "on this occaſion, but I have ſent for "him too late; his ſiſter writes my "niece word, that he is out on one of "his excurſions: had he been apprized "of my ſpeedy removal, his benevo-"lence would have united with his "friendſhip to ſend him hither. How-"ever, we ſhall all meet by and by, and in

" in the mean time I charge you with my " bleſſing to him." He then inquired affectionately for Aubrey's family, and prayed for their proſperity and happineſs. He pauſed frequently in ſpeaking, giving his friend an opportunity of making kind and conſolatory obſervations. Not being able to ſit up long at a time, he converſed with him in bed, to which he was reconveyed ſoon after Aubrey came in. He talked of his hopes in another ſtate of exiſtence, with the chearfulneſs of certainty. "God," ſaid he, " has graciouſly granted me a large por- " tion of temporal life: take it altoge- " ther, I truſt it has not been ill ſpent; " with whatever ſins and frailties it may " be ſpotted, I have the ſtrongeſt hope " that repentance and a lively faith in " the promiſes of the Saviour of the " world, will include me in the benevo-

" lent

" lent effects of his great, his glorious " paſſion. I have no heavy crime " weighing on my heart, and when I " took the ſacrament yeſterday, I felt " my ſoul renovated with hope and hea- " venly joy. I am now more than con- " tent to die: I have in view the wonders " and the bliſs of death: though my " heart is too feeble to pant for them, my " ſpirit does." Mrs. Searle begged him not to exhauſt himſelf—" Well, I " will not my love," replied he, " and " indeed I feel myſelf faint. I will ſleep " a little: we ſhall perhaps have another " day together to-morrow: if not, I " will pray for you in heaven. Death " is not grievous to thoſe who ſee God " in it." He cloſed his eyes and ſoon fell aſleep: he ſlept ſweetly, and awoke no more.

When men die like Dr. Searle, they diſpel the gloom of death, and almoſt ſhew

ſhew him fair and beautiful. That Power,

"Whom ſoft eyed pity onceled down from Heaven,
Smooths the laſt bed with pious hope and joy:
There props feeble Nature, calms all her fears,
Wakes all her hopes, and animates her faith,
Till the rapt ſoul, anticipating Heaven,
Burſts from the thraldom of incumb'ring clay,
And on the wing of ecſtaſy upborne
Springs into liberty, and light, and life. *"

* Porteus.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XLIV.

Dr. Searle's Will. State of Aubrey's Finances. Arthur's Choice of a Profeſſion. A Letter from Senſitive. Preſentation of the Rectory. Family Affection. Arrival of Senſitive. The Aubreys confirmed at the Parſonage.

THOUGH Dr. Searle was fully matured for Heaven, and his releaſe from earth had been long expected, the tear due to departed worth followed him to the grave. Mrs. Searle and Amelia loved their uncle, and lamented his ſeparation from them; but his great age, his virtues, and "his hold on Heaven," preſented ſtrong motives of conſolation to them and his other friends, and reconciled them to the mandate that called him

him from them. By the doctor's will the bulk of his property was left to Mrs. Searle and Amelia, and a portion of it was devoted to charitable purposes and friendly legacies. To Aubrey he left all the antique furniture at the Parsonage, with twenty pounds to purchase mourning-rings for all the family. To Mr. Cowper he left a sum of one thousand pounds for himself, and another thousand to be disposed of by him according to the spirit of his benevolent plan. Aubrey would have brought Mrs. Aubrey to stay with Mrs. Searle for some time; but the latter declined the offer, both as she knew that it would be inconvenient to her to leave her family, and as there was an old friend of her's engaged to come to her; he therefore took an affectionate leave of her, and returned to Mariton.

How-

However affected by the diſſolution of the good, friendly, old man, Aubrey was not forgetful of the intereſt of his family in the reverſionary hope of the rectory; and, as ſoon as the death of the rector could be communicated with certainty, he wrote a letter on the ſubject to Lord Aynsford, and another to Charles Senſitive. In the firſt he merely informed his lordſhip, that the time was arrived for the performance of his promiſe: in the other, he begged Senſitive to loſe not a moment in learning where the earl was, that there might be no room left for ſuſpence. At the Parſonage, the grief for the death of Dr. Searle was unfeigned, nor was it incompatible with the pleaſing expectations attendant on Aubrey's ſucceſſion. The Aubreys commemorated his general virtues, and dwelt with ſatisfaction on the particular proofs of his regard to them; but this did not

prevent

prevent their enjoying the poſſeſſion of a good, the proſpect of which they had contemplated before they knew him. Unaſſociated in ideas with the death of a friend, nothing could be more fortunate than the preſentment to the rectory, at a time when their finances were not only exhauſted, but their credit deeply involved. By Chriſtmas, Aubrey had drawn his whole fund out of the hands of his banker, and at Lady-day he was a full quarter in arrear to all his tradeſmen, over and above the ſtock of liquors with which his cellar had been repleniſhed. Could any thing, then, be more providential than the acceſſion of a revenue of twelve hundred a-year? With all their economical reſolutions on their arrival at Mariton, they had not been able to live much under the income ariſing from the rectory; and, what would have become of them in another

another year had this not fallen in? After praising and lamenting the late incumbent, they congratulated one another on the timely vacancy for his succeſſor, and entered into new reſolutions reſpecting their future expences.

In a few days, Aubrey received a letter from Senſitive, informing him that Lord Aynsford was not in the kingdom, but that he was expected ſhortly; and that Aubrey's letter from Leiceſter had been immediately forwarded to him, by the earl's agent, whom Senſitive had ſeen. This intelligence was a little vexatious; but, as the delay produced no doubt, the Aubreys were eaſily ſatisfied to wait with patience the arrival of Lord Aynsford, or his reply to the letter Aubrey had written, which they were ſure would be ſent as ſoon as poſſible. In the mean time, two objects principally engaged Aubrey's attention: a full and exact

exact ſtatement of his affairs, and the deciſion of a profeſſion for Arthur. He accordingly called in all his bills of every kind, thoſe in London as well as thoſe in the country, and, on caſting up the totals, found himſelf ſeven hundred pounds in debt.

With reſpect to Arthur, having read the elements of theology and ſeveral polemic writings, having examined the theories of medicine, and peruſed ſome of the works of Sydenham, Mead, Brown, and Cullen, and having gone through the Commentaries of Blackſtone with great attention, he declared himſelf in favour of the law. He ſaid, that divinity and ethics were to him the moſt captivating ſtudies; he conceived, however, the duty of a miniſter not only arduous, but, in the preſent ſtate of ſociety, almoſt impracticable; and, as a proof, he cited the experience of

his father, who, inclined as he was to discharge the pastoral office with the conscientiousness of an apostle, was debarred by the rules of polite conversation from introducing the topics of his profession; and who had learned to consider it as a compliment to himself, that the jests of freethinking, and profane talk were abstained from in his presence: and, as to the lower classes of society; those who felt a degree of independence looked with a jealous eye on the claimer of tithes and dues; while the poor, constrained in the presence of a superior, considered the visit of the minister as the intrusion of a spy upon their conduct. Aubrey allowed the justness of Arthur's observations; but, at the same time, remarked, that these difficulties, arising from the nature of men in the present state of society, afforded no good reason for turning away from the administration of

of the divine office, but rather the reverſe; for it is to conquer difficulties that men are called upon to undertake it; and, though he himſelf was not ſo ſucceſsful as he wiſhed, yet the ſucceſſive miniſtry of the Greys at Melford, was proof of what might be effected by piety and perſeverance. He confeſſed, however, that it was a very ſerious charge, and that no one ſhould be permitted to take it upon himſelf who did not feel an ardent deſire to be active in promoting the ſpiritual amelioration of mankind.

Next to divinity and ethics, Arthur was of opinion that the ſcience of medicine was moſt bewitching: of thoſe the health and ſalvation of the ſoul were the objects; of this the health of the body, and the ſoul's continuance in union with it. It was built upon a variety of knowledge of the moſt delightful kind: anatomy, botany, chemiſtry, natural hiſtory,

tory and philoſophy, effects of phyſical cauſes on the mind, and of mental ones on the body. A phyſician, uniting great ſkill with piety and virtue, was one of the firſt of characters among men, and participated in an eminent degree of the divine nature; but it was the moſt difficult of any to form, and the diſcharge of its duties the moſt delicate and alarming. In divinity, the reſponſibility of its profeſſor is not ſo great, or, rather, the nicety of his judgment is not ſo important; it is rarely to be attributed to him that the ſoul ſinks into corruption, depravity, and perdition; but the ſlighteſt error in a medical caſe often confirms diſeaſe or extinguiſhes life itſelf. Medical profeſſors, who practiſe in defiance of conſcious ignorance and inability, may give themſelves what title they pleaſe, but their true appellation is regiſtered in Heaven, and not unfrequently

in the calendars of ſtate priſons. Aubrey thought that Arthur refined too much. It was rare, if ever, that men unqualified for the practice of phyſic obtained a diploma; and, on dubious caſes, phyſicians had always opportunities of conſulting one another. He thought there was a better objection to the profeſſion than what was advanced by his ſon, and that was, the reluctance of the ſick to truſt themſelves to any but thoſe advanced in life, conceiving experience neceſſary to perfect theory: he was therefore content that Arthur ſhould paſs over the profeſſion of medicine.

The law was a wide field, a profeſſion in which conſcience was not even required to have any operation ſhort of the bench; for it had been an eſtabliſhed maxim from the ages of antiquity, that every lawyer was bound, right or wrong, to do his beſt for his client. It was a

profeſſion

profeſſion both profitable and honourable, and the members of it were ſometimes ſeen to make their way early: Arthur, therefore, delighted with the ſtile of the Commentaries, and with the fund of information he had obtained from them, decided for the bar: nor was Aubrey diſappointed; for, of the three learned profeſſions, he thought Arthur beſt ſuited to the law. The expence, indeed, of ſtudying the various branches of it would be heavy, but he ſhould now be enabled to make that exertion; and it was determined that his name ſhould be immediately entered at Lincoln's Inn, where he ſhould attend his terms, though for the next two years of his life he ſhould ſtudy at Cambridge; after which he ſhould reſide in town, to attend offices and the courts, and be called to the bar when he was four-and-twenty, a proper age to com-

mence his career. The time appeared not very long to Arthur, when he thought of it as preparatory to a profession: he sometimes, however, combined it in idea with Harriet; then did it seem an age; but, in heaving a sigh to love, he resolved by perseverance to be worthy of it.

A fortnight had now elapsed since the death of Dr. Searle, and there were no tidings of Lord Aynsford. Aubrey had preached a pathetic funeral sermon in honour of his late friend, and cared not how soon he preached on his own induction; but he was doomed to extend his patience still another fortnight, during which he continued to do the duty of the church with the greatest regularity. About a month after he had written to the earl, Cæsar one morning brought him in two letters, the superscription of one

one of which being in Senſitive's hand, he opened firſt, and read as follows:

" My dear Friend,

" I have watched Lord Aynsford's " door for this fortnight paſt, as a cat " does a mouſe, and I at length can in- " form you that he is arrived. He " came this morning; but I have en- " deavoured in vain to ſee him: I truſt, " however, that he writes to you by " this poſt. I am anxious to hear of " your preferment, and beg you will " not delay a moment writing to me " when you receive the earl's letter. " How are you all? Tell Emily that " ſhe has not broke Col. Spicer's heart: " I have ſeen him twice this week; " the firſt time in extaſies at the opera, " coquetting with a woman of faſhion; " and the laſt, laughing loud in a paſtry- " cook's ſhop in St. James's-ſtreet, at

" the ſight of a feeble, old woman in pur-
" ſuit of her jack-aſs. How could Emily
" refuſe ſuch a colonel? Tell my apt
" pupil that I think of her conſtantly,
" and hope to give her ſome new leſſons
" ere the month of May be over. Arthur
" will be ſorry to hear that his friend
" Sir Kit Keeping's noſe is grown red;
" the baronet is as faſhionable as ever
" notwithſtanding. Adieu! Remem-
" ber me affectionately to Mrs. Aubrey;
" and tell Arthur-William that I have
" bought ſome very nice ſtudies for
" him.

" Yours ſincerely,

" CHARLES SENSITIVE."

Fond as they all were of Senſitive, they were eager to get through his letter the moment they heard that Lord Aynſford was arrived; for they concluded on the probability of the other letter being from

" of * * for inſtitution, and proceed with-
" out delay to the pariſh for the purpoſe
" of induction. There will be no oc-
" caſion for you to put yourſelf to the
" leaſt inconvenience, as I can lodge at
" an inn while my preſence may be ne-
" ceſſary at Mariton; and, as I mean
" to reſide at my prior benefice, I ſhall
" make no objection, if you wiſh it, to
" your continuance in the church as my
" curate. I am, ſir,

" Your humble ſervant,

" RICH. BOWES."

Thus, at one blow, were all the hopes of the Aubreys cruſhed: the payment of debts, the enabling of Arthur to purſue the profeſſion he had choſen, the accumulating of portions for his ſiſters, a comfortable exiſtence—all gone! vaniſhed from their view; and, inſtead, appeared embarraſſment, poverty, and

mortification. The Aubreys were at first too much confounded to give utterance to their consternation. Aubrey again took up Dr. Bowes's letter: after looking at it for some minutes, he repeated from it—"presented by the Earl "of Aynsford!" Arthur, who was now slowly pacing up and down the room, cried "Villain!" Mrs. Aubrey sat stupified: Emily and Arthurina anxiously watched their father's countenance; Arthur-William saw distress painted in it, and was silent. At length Aubrey exclaimed: "I am too certainly awake; "my dream of happiness is for ever "fled; I am roused to be sensible of "ruin."—"I can hardly believe my "senses," said Mrs Aubrey; "how can "it be? There is some mistake; Lord "Aynsford can never be so consummate "a villain. Write, my dear Aubrey, "immediately, and inquire into it."—

"Dear

"'Dear Emily," replied Aubrey, "have "I not already written? Was not I the "first who informed Lord Aynsford "of the death of Dr. Searle?"—"Did "the earl promise you positively?" said Mrs. Aubrey.—"Positively," replied Aubrey, "if a voluntary offer on his "part, and a grateful acceptance on "mine, is positive. Nay more, you "may remember that I told you at the "time, he urged me to look forward to "a bishopric."—"What do you mean "to do?" said Mrs. Aubrey; "will "you not expose his baseness?"—"A-"las! my dear Emily," replied he, "of "what avail will it be? A question "which is answered in one line of "Sensitive's letter, where he tells us, "that Sir Kit Keeping is as fashionable "as ever. Was not his baseness pub-"licly exposed? No, my love! revenge "is not in our power; and, if it were,

" we would be ſuperior to it. Though
" Lord Aynsford is baſe, I am not with-
" out blame: he has been falſe, I have
" been fooliſh; for is it not extreme
" folly to live on expectation? Had I
" been commonly prudent, had I taught
" you to contemplate the poſſibility of a
" diſappointment, and to live accor-
" dingly, we ſhould none of us have
" felt this blow ſo ſeverely. They who
" cannot learn wiſdom from the mild
" dictates of Reaſon, muſt ſubmit to
" have it forced upon them by the rough
" hand of Experience. I, my dear
" Emily, I alone am now to blame, and
" it is the will of Providence that we
" ſhould ſuffer for it; yes, that you,
" my love, and you, my dear children,
" ſhould ſuffer for it: for, however in-
" conſiſtent with the goodneſs of God
" the concluſion of the ſecond com-
" mandment has been thought, it is in

" fact

" fact nothing more than a ſimple de-
" claration of the nature of things. Chil-
" dren are naturally involved in the er-
" rors, I will not ſhock you by ſaying
" ſins on this occaſion, of their parents;
" and what wonder is it that the viſita-
" tion ſhould deſcend to the third and
" fourth generation? But let us take cou-
" rage; for we know that we love our
" Chaſtiſer, and we may hope, when he
" has purified us a little more, that he
" will ſhow his mercy to us."—" I can-
" not ſee how you are to blame," ſaid
Mrs. Aubrey, " for relying on the faith
" of a man who profeſſed ſuch friend-
" ſhip for you, and I am ſure no man on
" earth was ever actuated by purer mo-
" tives and intentions than you ever
" were; I cannot, therefore, bear to
" hear you cenſure yourſelf in this man-
" ner. If there be any blame, it is ours
" more than yours, influenced as you

" ever

"ever are by your affection for us." The tears, which had risen gently to the eyes of Emily and Arthurina, ran down their cheeks, when their mother spoke in this manner. "Indeed, indeed, papa," cried Emily, "you are not to blame: "pray, do not blame yourself; pray let "us be happy in spite of every thing; "the poorer we are the more we shall "love one another."—"My dear girl," said Aubrey, "love is a grand resource; "and, while we continue united, we can "never be very unhappy. It is fruitless "to complain; we must yield to the "will of Providence; and all that we "have now to do is to live as the family "of the curate of Mariton, and no "longer like that of the rector. Come "Emily, my love," continued he, addressing Mrs. Aubrey, "recover your-"self; let us submit to this calamity "with becoming resignation; and let us

"imme-

" immediately ſet about thoſe reforms " and retrenchments that will enable us " to live within the ſtipend of the cu- " racy. The ſituation will be novel to " us; but let us remember that there are " many clergymen ſerving curacies for a " leſs income; and let us endeavour to " find out the ſecret by which they con- " trive to live with large families, and " ſupport the dignity of a gentleman." —" It will, I fear, be difficult to diſco- " ver," replied Mrs. Aubrey; " and " here more difficult than any where " elſe."—" You will have to brunt the " ſneers and brutality of the Spicers and " ſome others," ſaid Aubrey; " but, as " Cowper told us, before he knew of " Lord Aynsford's promiſe, we ſhall " ſtill have a good houſe over our heads, " a garden that will yield us vegetables " and fruit, and ſome money to buy " bread, clothes, and firing; and, I may " add,

" add, we ſhall be ſaved the expence of " a removal: then ſurely we have ſuffi- " cient ſtrength of mind, and a ſufficient " ſtock of love amongſt us, to turn aſide " the ſhafts of malice, and to render us " indifferent to the contumely of pride. " Come Emily, come my children, let " us rally our powers. It is no wonder " that this unexpected blow ſhould have " thrown us into confuſion; but we will " not yield to it; we will imitate ſome " of the great examples we have ad- " mired in our books, and be the wor- " thier of eſteem for adverſity." Mrs. Aubrey looked at him with new delight, and in ſilence gave him her hand, as the tear of mingling pity and admiration dropped upon her cheek. Arthur, who was near her, kiſſed it off, and vowed to devote his life to the happineſs of the family. " You muſt ſend me abroad, ſir," ſaid he to his father, " in queſt of " fortune;

" fortune; others as poor as myself " have succeeded, and why not I? The " Indies, East or West, hold up hope to " adventurers, and who knows but I " may find the road much shorter to " prosperity than that I had chosen."— " We will think how we may act for " the best, my dear boy," replied his father, pressing his hand; " and he that " sees our hearts will remove our diffi- " culties, or aid us to support them."

Thus, consoled by family affections and the purity of their intentions, the Aubreys resolved to be the first to report the disappointment of their hopes, that it might be known before the arrival of Dr. Bowes: and, while Aubrey staid at home to write to him and to Sensitive, Mrs. Aubrey and the girls called on some of their friends to announce the change that had taken place. Arthur intended at first to accompany his

his mother and ſiſters; but, while they were putting on their things, his thoughts ſtrayed to Eden-bower, and he remained at home to write to Edmund. As confidence and candour were no leſs prized at Eden-bower than at the Parſonage, Arthur having determined not to communicate his admiration of Miſs Smyth to her uncle, never mentioned her in his correſpondence with Edmund more particularly than the reſt of the family; and, as matters were arranged with Aubrey, he thought it beſt to confine all information reſpecting Emily to barely ſaying, "My ſiſters and I talk of you "with the greateſt intereſt and regard." In his preſent letter, after relating the diſappointment and ſituation of his family, he added, that he eſteemed himſelf fortunate in one reſpect, but that it was a ſubject of a delicate nature, and he ſhould not enter upon it. He knew

that

that his friend would readily gueſs that it was a comfort to him not to have involved Harriet in an engagement or affection which now could only have been replete with miſery; and he abſtained from being more particular, that Edmund might not be under the neceſſity of drawing his paſſion from the oblivion to which it was now conſigned.

Aubrey, in his letter to Dr. Bowes, congratulated him on his preferment, without deigning to mention Lord Aynſford, and invited him to take up his abode at the Parſonage, which would not be attended with the ſlighteſt inconvenience: he alſo declared his wiſh of remaining in the curacy. To Senſitive he wrote at large, and poured out the feelings of his heart. Mrs. Aubrey and the girls returned home in conſiderable ſpirits, having been cheered by the ſmiles of their friends and the encouraging remarks

marks usually made on such occasions; and a kind of calm ensued at the Parsonage, which was at first rather the lull of suspended sensibility than the tranquil enjoyment of repose. In a few days Sensitive arrived at Mariton, and, at the end of the week, was followed by Dr. Bowes, who accepted Aubrey's invitation, and staid at the rectory while it was necessary for him to be in the parish. Being formally inducted, he read the articles in the church on Sunday, and preached; and on Monday and Tuesday he received visits from his parishioners, many of whom Aubrey invited to dine with him.

The doctor had little condescension in his manners; he received civilities as if he conferred obligation in admitting them. The haughtiness of his mind was fully denoted in the height, corpulency, and erectness of his person, as well

well as by the consequential air of his countenance. He seldom smiled or spoke in the morning; but a good dinner excited good humour, and he condescended to praise Aubrey's wine. The parishioners were not at all prepossessed in his favour, and were not much grieved to receive the apology he deigned to make for not residing among them. Aubrey scrupled not to complain to him of the unfair conduct of his patron, whom he represented as having disappointed him most grossly, after suffering him to live two years in hopes of the presentation. "I'll tell you how that is," said the doctor; "you mistook each other: my lord talked "to me about it, and shewed me your let- "ter: the whole matter is, you mistook "each other."—"I could never mistake "the positive offer he made me of the "benefice."—"That was before he was "aware of your uncle's will."—"Then "he

"he ſhould have told me if the know-
"ledge of it cauſed an alteration of his
"purpoſe."—"Why, that was implied
"in what he had previouſly ſaid."—
"Implied! how?"—"Did not he ſay
"that it was with a view of adding
"ſtrength and weight to his con-
"nexions?"—"I remember he did."
—"Well, then! when the caſe was ſo
"clearly altered, was not the offer in-
"volved in its fate?"—"I wiſh he
"had been explicit."—"That would
"have been indelicate, and Lord Aynſ-
"ford is incapable of indelicacy. I
"aſſure you, Mr. Aubrey, he expreſſes
"a great regard for you; and he told
"me to find an opportunity of explain-
"ing this matter to you. You ſee it
"was a miſtake."—"Yes, ſir, a me-
"lancholy one to me." Aubrey pur-
ſued the ſubject no farther; and, on
Wedneſday morning, Dr. Bowes ſet
out

out on his return to town, leaving him ſtill in poſſeſſion of the curacy of Mariton.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XLV.

Senſibility. Alteration at the Parſonage. Extraordinary Apparition at Leiceſter. Mr. Cowper's Adventure at Okeham. Arrival at Mariton. Reſolution reſpecting Smyth. The Ghoſts of the Caſtle.

SENSITIVE remained at the parſonage to partake the regret of his friends, and to afford them all the conſolation in his power. No ſooner had he received Aubrey's letter, than he poſted to the Earl of Aynsford's to inquire into the cauſe of his diſappointment; but, finding it impoſſible to gain admittance, he returned home, ordered his ſervant to pack up a portmanteau for him, and ſet out that very day for Leiceſterſhire.

Aubrey himſelf ſcarce felt the calamity ſo much as Senſitive, who execrated the perfidious earl, and would have laid his whole fortune at the feet of his friend, had there been a probability of his accepting it; but, fearful of hurting Aubrey, he confined himſelf to hints of having money in his banker's hands, and much more than he knew what to do with, reſolving, on the ſlighteſt encouragement, to offer him whatever ſum he might want. He was vexed at finding nothing from Aubrey tending to his deſign. As Aubrey now dealt on credit, he was in no want of money: there was ſtill wine in his cellar, and his ſupplies were delivered as uſual. No alteration at firſt appeared at the Parſonage, except one; but that was a very important one, the excluſion of company at ſet dinners: tea and evening parties were all they indulged in, and theſe more for the ſake

of hoſpitality than for the gratification they afforded; for they could find all that was neceſſary to happineſs in their own circle, and with the few who, like Senſitive, was, when among them, conſidered as one of it. Of theſe Cowper and his family ſtood foremoſt; for, though the ladies had not yet met, Cowper, Edmund, and Arthur, had completely endeared them to the Aubreys.

Mr. Cowper had ſeveral times intended to carry his ſiſter and niece over to Mariton; but his avocations, and perhaps his reluctance to incurring the expences of a long journey, had hitherto prevented it: he was now, however, determined by the diſappointment the Aubreys had met with, to delay his intention no longer. Leaving Edmund at Eden-bower to ſuperintend his affairs, he ſet out in the beginning of May with Mrs. Smyth and Harriet. Mrs. Smyth had

had long relinquiſhed every idea of ever ſeeing her huſband again, had completely placed all her happineſs on her children and on her friendſhip with her brother, and had reſumed the natural gaiety of her diſpoſition from the time ſhe went to Eden-bower. This had received a ſevere ſhock from the loſs of her niece, whom ſhe loved as her own daughter: but ſhe had again recovered it in a great degree; and, if ſhe were not always lively, ſhe was ſeldom otherwiſe than cheerful. At Leiceſter an extraordinary occurrence took place, that again ſhook her ſpirits. Mr. Cowper had ſome buſineſs to tranſact with Mrs. Searle; Harriet had gone to take a walk with Amelia; and Mrs. Smyth was left by herſelf writing a letter in a front parlour of the inn. From the inn-yard a poſt-chaiſe drew to the door, as if to take up ſome perſon. Preſently the parlour-

door opened, and in walked a man, whom Mrs. Smyth, in ſpite of the difference of dreſs, and the alteration of countenance produced by years, immediately recognized to be her huſband. The ſudden apparition was too much for her to bear; ſhe exclaimed, "Merciful "God!" and dropt down upon the floor, bereft of ſenſe. When ſhe came to herſelf, ſhe found Harriet and Amelia applying ſalts to her noſe, and endeavouring to revive her. She caſt her eyes round the room, and, not ſeeing Smyth, cried, "Where is he?"—"Who? my dear mamma," ſaid Harriet, the tears running down her cheeks. —"Did you ſee him?" cried Mrs. Smyth.—"See whom?" replied Harriet.—"Your father."—"My father! "what can you mean, my dear mam-"ma? pray, be compoſed."—"Where "is your uncle?" cried Mrs. Smyth

eagerly; "ring the bell, ſend for him "this inſtant; call the waiter." Amelia, terrified, rang the bell. "No," ſaid Mrs. Smyth, "run you, make "haſte, and bring him; bring my bro-"ther to me immediately."—"Do you "ſtay with your mother, my love," ſaid Amelia to Harriet, "and I will go for "your uncle." Harriet thanked her, and ſhe went away as faſt as ſhe could walk. The waiter meeting Miſs Searle at the door, as he was going to anſwer the bell, was deſired by her to carry in a glaſs of water; which he haſtened for, and brought to Mrs. Smyth; who, coming more to herſelf after diſpatching Miſs Searle for her brother, drank the water, and ſuffered the man to aſſiſt her daughter in raiſing her into a chair. As ſhe gained ſtrength, ſhe began to ſuſpect that the apparition of her huſband was merely an illuſion of the brain; but

from this apprehenſion ſhe was ſoon relieved by queſtioning the landlady, who returned with the waiter, and who informed her that Mr. Smyth dined in the houſe, and had been gone about half an hour, in the laſt chaiſe that drove up to the door on the other ſide of the gateway. She aſked if he had come into her parlour before he went. The landlady ſaid ſhe did not know, but that it was not unlikely; for it was a very common miſtake to go into one room of an inn inſtead of another. She then examined her as to his figure, which correſponded nearly with the deſcription ſhe gave of it. From theſe circumſtances ſhe was perfectly convinced that ſhe had ſeen her huſband; but, alas! ſhe was no leſs convinced that he was reſolved not to acknowledge her.

Amelia ſoon returned, bringing both Mr. Cowper and Mrs. Searle. On the way,

way, ſhe had explained to them, that, having been walking with Harriet about an hour, ſhe returned with her to the inn, either to prevail on Mrs. Smyth to accompany them, the evening being delightful, or to ſtay with her; that, going into the parlour, they found her on the floor ſenſeleſs; on which they had called in the landlady, who aſſiſted for ſome time to bring her to herſelf, and had only left them a few minutes, to look for ſtronger ſalts, when ſhe revived; and that, on reviving, ſhe ſpoke of having ſeen her huſband. When they arrived, Mrs. Smyth was perfectly reſtored to her recollection; and her relation being corroborated by the declaration of the landlady, Mr. Cowper was ſatisfied that the figure ſhe had ſeen was no phantom. The miſtreſs of the inn was again ſummoned, and queſtioned by Cowper reſpecting Mr. Smyth. She ſaid that

ſhe knew him very well, from his dining ſeveral times in the year at the houſe with gentlemen of the county, and occaſionally taking a bed there; that he was a man of fortune, having a very fine eſtate near Peterborough; but ſhe had never heard of his being married, or of his having been abroad. Mr. Cowper then inquired with whom he had dined; and ſhe mentioned ſeveral gentlemen, with one of whom he had a ſlight acquaintance. Reſolved to loſe no time in purſuing Smyth, Mr. Cowper left his ſiſter to the care of Mrs. Searle, and called immediately on the gentleman, whoſe name was Bowater. The information he received from him tended rather to weaken than confirm the idea of the perſon in queſtion being his ſiſter's huſband. "I have known Smyth," ſaid he, "for a dozen years paſt. He "is much ſuch a man in perſon as you "deſcribe,

" deſcribe, allowing for the difference " of years and free living. He is a *bon* " *vivant*, and a humouriſt. He inhe- " rited a good property in Norfolk " when he came of age; and, at the " death of an uncle, came into a pretty " little eſtate in Northamptonſhire, near " Peterborough, ſince which I have " been acquainted with him. I under- " ſtand he made a tour on the Conti- " nent in the early part of his life; but " I am confident he was never married. " He is a good-natured old batchelor, " and you would like him much." This was by no means the character of the villain whom Cowper had loſt ſight of for near twenty years; but, as no other part of the account was inconſiſtent with the hiſtory of him at Oporto, it was not ſufficient to deter Mr. Cowper from perſevering in his deſign of aſcertaining the truth by his own eyes, which he com-

municated to Mr. Bowater, at the ſame time begging his aſſiſtance in proceeding with propriety. "If you are deter-"mined upon it," ſaid Mr. Bowater, "I'll give you a letter of introduction to "him; and you had better ſet off at "once and overtake him at the next "ſtage, where he means to ſleep: it is "not eight o'clock, and he has not "been gone an hour." Mr. Cowper accepted the offer; and, leaving Mr. Bowater to write the letter, went to order a chaiſe.

While the horſes were putting to, he ſat with his ſiſter, whom he comforted in the moſt affectionate manner. The more he reflected on the account he had heard of Smyth, the more he was puzzled; and, though he was too much impreſſed with the circumſtances of his being ſeen by his wife, and the greatneſs of his fortune, to relinquiſh the belief of this being the

the man; yet he was perplexed with the character Mr. Bowater had given of him. The concealment of his marriage was eaſily reconciled to the brutal diſpoſition of his brother-in-law, but not ſo eaſily to the good nature aſcribed to him by his friend: and, even ſuppoſing a favourable change had taken place in his diſpoſition, and that, being weaned from his family by length of time and other connexions, he indolently lived on without being diſturbed by thoughts of his injuſtice; yet to meet his wife, refuſe to acknowledge her, and leave her ſenſeleſs on the floor, beſpoke no ſuch alteration. There was an obſcurity in the ſubject, and Cowper could not doubt for a moment that it behoved him to clear it up. Meanwhile, Mr. Bowater had written the following letter to Mr. Smyth: "Dear Smyth, I beg "leave to introduce Mr. Cowper to

" you, a gentleman who claims the ho-
" nour of being your brother-in-law.
" So, you are a very pretty fellow, Mr.
" Smyth, to be caught by the fine eyes
" of Harriet Cowper at Oporto, to
" marry her, and then leave her with
" two children twenty years ago. The
" fact is, my dear Smyth, that Cowper
" and his ſiſter have been very ill uſed
" by a perſon of your name, who in-
" thralled him in an intrigue with a
" Portugueſe beauty named Seraphina
" de Monocella, and, marrying his ſiſ-
" ter, deſerted her and his children about
" eighteen months after the marriage.
" They have never been able to diſcover
" him ſince, till this very day, when he
" was detected in your perſon, by your
" happening to go into the parlour where
" Mrs. Smyth was. Believing all this
" to be a miſtake, I have told Cowper
" who you are, and, as he is bent on
" ſatiſ-

" ſatisfying his own eyes, I have given
" him this letter to you at his requeſt.
" He is a worthy creature; and you
" will have the pleaſure of making him
" laugh over this, at a good ſupper.

" Yours ſincerely,

" THO. BOWATER."

This letter was written and ſealed before the return of Mr. Cowper, who, impatient to be gone, ſtopped only to receive it, and then ordered the boy to drive on to Okeham. On the way, he revolved the circumſtances in his mind, and, before he reached the town, had worked himſelf into a certainty that he was about to meet the dire enemy of his life. He examined his heart, and found it purified from every ſentiment of revenge: in his purſuit he was actuated ſolely by the deſire of doing juſtice to his ſiſter and her children. If Smyth were

ſtill

ſtill as baſe as when he reſided at Oporto, his patrimonial property might prove to be ſettled; and, if not, ſtill he might be compelled to allow his wife a ſupport, adequate to his ſituation in life: but, at all events, Mr. Cowper determined to act coolly, and rather to ſoothe than to irritate him. The road being very hilly, it was paſt ten o'clock before he arrived at Okeham, where the firſt thing he did was to inquire for Mr. Smyth; and was told that he was juſt gone up to his bed-room. Anxious to ſee him, and reſolved not to ſleep before his mind was at reſt, he deſired the landlord to carry up Mr. Bowater's letter, and to tell him that the gentleman who brought it begged earneſtly to ſee him before he went to bed.

Having ſhown Mr. Cowper into a room, the landlord went to execute his commiſſion. He was gone ſome time, during

during which Cowper's patience was not a little tried. At length he returned, and ſaid, that the gentleman was unwell, and could ſee nobody that night. "I "am ſure," ſaid Cowper, "that he "would ſee me, let him be ever ſo ill, "if he knew of what importance it was." —"Why truly, ſir," replied Boniface, "it muſt be ſomething of importance; "for I never ſaw a man turn wild ſo all "of a ſudden as Mr. Smyth when he "read the letter; he jumped from one "ſide of the room to the other, calling "Cowper, Cowper, over and over again. "I verily believe he is mad."—"Show "me to his door;" cried Cowper, more and more convinced of the identity of Smyth; "I have but to ſay a word to "him, and I am clear he will admit "me: ſhow me the way."—"By all "means, ſir," replied the landlord; who, taking up a candle, lighted Mr. Cowper

Cowper up ſtairs to Mr. Smyth's door. He tried the lock without ceremony, and, finding the door open to his touch, walked into the chamber, where he ſaw Mr. Smyth in his ſhirt, ſtanding at the glaſs, blacking his eye-brows and the lines of his face with a burnt cork. No ſooner, however, was Mr. Cowper in the chamber, than he threw down the cork, and jumping into bed, pulled the clothes over his face. "This is too "much, ſir," cried Cowper; "but I "want no farther proof. Landlord, "leave the room; I have ſomething to "ſay to this gentleman in private."— "Oh, no!" ſaid Mr. Smyth, in a rough feigned voice, "oh, no! he will mur- "der me!"—"I never ſaw a gentleman "ſo frightened in all my life," ſaid the landlord to Mr. Cowper; "you had "better leave him till to-morrow, ſir." Mr. Cowper began to believe that the

ſudden

ſudden ſight of his ſiſter, and the equally ſudden intelligence of his being at the inn, together with his coming into the chamber without his permiſſion, had really had an effect upon Smyth's brain; he therefore ſpoke to him in the gentleſt and kindeſt manner: "Come, Mr. "Smyth," ſaid he, "let not this affect "you too much: we are now both "older, and are, I hope, wiſer and better "men than we were twenty years ago." Smyth groaned; and, peeping over the bed-clothes, cried out, in the ſame rough voice: "Go, go." There was but little light in the room; yet Cowper thought he perceived, beneath the cork marks, the features of the villain who had ruined him, and he ſhuddered at the recollection. He ſaw the face, however, but for a moment, for Smyth calling out, "Cowper! Harriet! Seraphina!" again plunged beneath the clothes.

Theſe

Theſe exclamations ſatisfied Mr. Cowper that he had at laſt found the huſband of his ſiſter; and, fearing that his continuing by him might complete the derangement of a guilty conſcience, he withdrew, deſiring the landlord to attend to him, and ſaying that he would wait to converſe with him in the morning, when he hoped to find him compoſed.

Having eat a light ſupper, Mr. Cowper ſat with a little wine and water before him, ruminating on the difference in the characters of men, and on the event that had juſt taken place, when the landlord came into the room, and ſaid, that Mr. Blount the ſurgeon would be glad to ſpeak to him. "I know no ſuch "perſon," ſaid Mr. Cowper; "what "can he want with me?"—"Sir," anſwered the landlord, "ſeeing Mr. Smyth "was ſo bad, I fetched him of my own "accord."

" accord"—" Oh! by all means," ſaid Mr. Cowper, " let him come in." The door was opened, and in came the doctor. He was a tall man, with a quick eye, and a projecting under-lip, which having the correſpondent muſcles of the upper-lip drawn towards the cheeks, ſeemed to mark his countenance with a ſettled, ſignificant ſmile. It was one of thoſe countenances that conſtantly incline a ſpectator to laugh, and is the beſt auxiliary a wag can have.—" The gen-
" tleman, ſir, will do very well," ſaid the facetious doctor, " very well indeed. I
" have bled him copiouſly, clapped a bliſ-
" ter on the occiput, and ordered him a
" gentle cathartic: he will do very well,
" very well indeed. I find he has been
" abroad, ſir; talks Portugueſe like the
" very mouth of the Tagus. His ideas
" run upon a Donna Seraphina, and he
" talks of a Harriet Cowper. I take it,
" ſir,

" ſir, he muſt have had ſome fatal love " affair with that Donna that dwells " upon his mind."—" Pray ſir," ſaid Mr. Cowper, " did you know Mr. " Smyth before?"—" Smyth of Walſ- " ham in Norfolk! of Widrington Park " in Northamptonſhire! know him?" cried the doctor; " odd's fiſh, ſir, does " a beggar know his diſh? I have " known him ever ſince I was a boy: " he is about my own age. He has a " kinck, ſir: this is not the firſt time I " have found phlebotomy and Spaniſh " flies proper for his temperament."— " Allow me," ſaid Mr. Cowper, " to " aſk you, as you have known him ſo " long, whether you remember his liv- " ing ſome time in Portugal, and whe- " ther you ever heard of his being mar- " ried."—" He was in Portugal a long " while," replied Dr. Blount, " but ne- " ver married: yet one would imagine

" from

" from his harping upon marriage as he " did to-night, that he had been in- " thralled in ſome untoward match of " that ſort: ' Doctor,' ſaid he to me, as " he was going to ſwallow the cathartic, ' I'll give you Rocheſter's toaſt on a ' certain marriage:

" Here's to Kate,
" Our ſovereign's mate,
" Of the royal houſe of Liſbon;
" But the Devil take Hyde,
" And the biſhop beſide,
" That made her bone his bone.'

" I take it, ſir, he committed ſome " prank with that Donna Seraphina, " which, ſome way or other, prevented " his ever thinking of marrying in Eng- " land; and that's a pity, for his wealth, " Sir, is immenſe, immenſe."—" Do " you think, doctor," ſaid Mr. Cowper, " that the wandering of his intellect will " be of ſhort duration?"—" Over al- " ready,

" ready, sir," replied the facetious surgeon, " or he could not have repeated " the poetical toast: over already, but " he must not be disturbed any more to- " night; he will be as well in the morn- " ing as ever he was in his life."—" I " hope it will be so," said Mr. Cowper; " for I have business of importance with " him."—" By all means," cried the doctor; " only let him have his rest out. " You look pale, good sir," continued he, seizing Mr. Cowper's wrist, and feeling his pulse: " no; only a little sink- " ing from agitation and fatigue." He then took up a wine-glass, and pouring some wine and water into it from Mr. Cowper's goblet, drew a vial from his breeches-pocket, and put about a tea-spoonful of its contents into the glass, saying: " this will set all to rights; it is " a capital cordial; I always carry it " about me. It will comfort and re-

" fresh

"freſh you beyond every thing." Mr. Cowper ſmiled, and ſwallowed it without making the leaſt objection. The doctor then adviſing him to go to bed ſoon, wiſhed him a good night, and withdrew. His laughable countenance left a ſtrong impreſſion on Mr. Cowper, who, as ſoon as he was gone, gave way to the ludicrous effect of it, and laughed heartily. He ſoon after felt himſelf drowſy, and went to bed, giving an order to be called very early.

When he woke next day, he obſerved his window-curtains drawn up, and the ſun ſhining into the room full from the ſouth: he looked at his watch, and it corroborated, with mechanical preciſion, the evidence of the ſun; it was near one o'clock: he had ſlept almoſt fourteen hours. He rang the bell violently; and a waiter coming in, he aſked why he had not been called as he deſired. The waiter

waiter assured him that the chamber-maid had called him at seven o'clock, and that he himself had come into the room at nine, and drawn up his curtains. Mr. Cowper now perceived that he had simply suffered himself to be the object of a trick, which he did not doubt was concerted between Smyth and his doctor. He no longer gave faith to his feigned derangement, or to the surgeon's operations; he was certain that Smyth first meant to disguise himself, but that having foolishly betrayed his person by the mention of Seraphina and his sister in his pretended madness, had determined to part without any explanation. He dressed himself, and, going to his room below, sent for the landlord, whom he asked for Mr. Smyth; and was informed, that he and Mr. Blount went away together at eight o'clock in the morning, but that he had left his compliments

pliments and a letter for Mr. Cowper to carry to Leiceſter. The letter was directed to Mr. Bowater. Mr. Cowper had too great a command of himſelf, and poſſeſſed too much good ſenſe, to expoſe the affair farther at the inn: he was thoroughly ſatisfied both of the perſon and unaltered baſeneſs of Smyth, and, knowing now who he was, and where to find him, he thought it needleſs to purſue him farther at preſent; he therefore took ſome refreſhment, ordered his chaiſe, and returned to Leiceſter.

He ſent a porter with the letter to Mr. Bowater; while he ſtaid and related his adventure to his ſiſter, whom he conſoled as well as he could, and aſſured that he would now ſee juſtice done to her. He had hardly finiſhed his ſtory, when he received the following note from Mr. Bowater, incloſing Smyth's letter to him: "Dear ſir, I

" think it neceſſary to ſend you the in-
" cloſed, that you may be convinced how
" entirely you are miſtaken in Mr.
" Smyth; and I hope it will not be long
" before I have the pleaſure of ſeeing
" you together at my houſe. I am,"
&c.—" It is not the villain's hand,"
ſaid Cowper, looking at the letter from
Smyth, which was as follows:

" Dear Bowater,

" When your friend Mr. Cowper ſent
" me your letter laſt night I was gone
" up to bed, and in one of thoſe unac-
" countable fits you have ſometimes ſeen
" me overtaken with. I would have poſt-
" poned meeting him till the morning;
" but he broke abruptly into my cham-
" ber. He was polite enough, how-
" ever, to leave me, on finding the un-
" comfortable ſtate I was in. Perhaps
" he was ſatisfied that I am not the

" perſon

" perſon he ſuppoſed; though I think
" he could hardly have ſeen enough of
" me to diſtinguiſh properly. I waited
" a conſiderable time this morning in
" hope of ſeeing him; but finding that
" he preferred his bed, I concluded he
" was convinced, and I ſet out from
" Okeham, it being neceſſary that I
" ſhould get to Peterborough early. I
" aſſure you that I do not know Mr.
" Cowper, and I never was at Oporto,
" though I have been at Liſbon. If he
" ſhould have any doubt remaining on
" his mind, it will be eaſily removed
" next time I come to Leiceſter, where
" I ſhall have great pleaſure in laughing
" the matter over with him at your
" table. At preſent I am going from
" Widrington Park immediately into
" Norfolk, thence to London, and Hea-
" ven knows where. I am too unwell
" this morning to uſe the pen myſelf."—

 ["*Oh!*

[" *Oh! you are!*" *exclaimed Mr. Cowper;* " *I thought it would be so.*"]—" I " am too unwell this morning to use the " pen myself; and the doctor who is with " me kindly writes what I dictate. I'll " trouble you with my compliments to " Mr. Cowper.

" Yours sincerely,

" E. S."

" Compliments to Mr. Cowper!" exclaimed Cowper; " what a soul must " this man have! not satisfied with his " villainy, he adds insult to injury." It was clear to him that Mr. Smyth was resolved to avoid him, and that it would at present be very difficult, or rather impossible, to force him to an interview; he therefore contented himself with sending the letter back to Mr. Bowater, in a note, in which he merely said that he was satisfied. Having concluded the business

buſineſs he had with Mrs. Searle, he, his ſiſter, and niece, took leave of her and of Amelia, and proceeded to Mariton. On the road they talked of the extraordinary event that had happened; and Mr. Cowper lamented that he was not in the parlour at the time Smyth came in. Mrs. Smyth bore her lot with patience, nor ever formed a wiſh for a re-union with him: but Harriet, poor Harriet, frequently ſighed, and ſaid, with tears in her eyes, that it was a hard fate to be deſerted by a father. "You have "never known the want of one, Har-"riet," ſaid Mrs. Smyth.—"No, in-"deed," replied Harriet, leaning on her uncle's neck, "I never have: my uncle "has been as the kindeſt of fathers to "me; yet, to be forſaken by the author "of my life! O! uncle! is it not a "very, *very* painful thought?"—"It is, "it is, my dear Harriet," replied Mr.

Cowper; "but it is a leſs evil than "being under the dominion of a bad "man." He then turned the converſation on their friends at the parſonage at Mariton, renewed his counſels to her reſpecting the paſſions in general, and particularly cautioned her to keep a guard on her heart againſt that which led to marriage. He was ſtill ſpeaking to her on the ſubject when the chaiſe ſtopped at the parſonage door, and Arthur flew up to it to hand them out. Never was joy more ſincere than that which ſpread through the houſe on the meeting of the families; it was the meeting of affectionate brothers and ſiſters. Some little regret obtruded itſelf generally for the neceſſity of Edmund's abſence; and it was greateſt perhaps in the boſoms of Arthur and Emily, but it was not viſible: nor did Mr. Cowper ſuffer that which he felt for Aubrey's diſappointment to be

per-

perceived. Though he had ſeldom been in company with Senſitive, he was not unknown to him; he was glad to ſee him at Mariton, and cordially ſhook hands with him: he treated him as one of the family, and freely related before him the conduct of Smyth, and the whole adventure that had lately occurred with him. The circumſtance created great ſurpriſe; and Aubrey at firſt was for purſuing him immediately from place to place, and hunting him down like a wild beaſt: but he was convinced by Mr. Cowper that it would be time loſt, as the proceſs of the eccleſiaſtical court would more eaſily effect all that could be obtained: and, as he ſhould alſo apply to the courts of common law for near twenty years' maintenance, the villain might, in the mean time, unpurſued by him, run from pillar to poſt to avoid him.

When more interesting communications permitted, Aubrey informed Mr. Cowper of the tricks that were played at the castle to frighten the country people. The actors in the farce had desisted from exhibiting them during the winter; but they had re-appeared a few days before Mr. Cowper's arrival. There was no likelihood of their being detected in the fact, as they only made their appearance at long intervals, when all expectation of them had subsided: their manœuvres were short, and they were gone before any body could reach the castle. This information led Mr. Cowper and Sensitive separately to go several days to examine the castle minutely: neither of them could trace any thing that might lead to a discovery. One evening, when the whole party had been out walking on the opposite side of the country, Sensitive, loitering behind

hind the reſt with Arthurina, was attracted by the figure of a well-dreſſed man on horſeback aſcending a hill, which they were going down. At firſt Senſitive doubted his eyes; but was ſoon convinced that they did not deceive him. It was a man who had been a penſioner of his for ſeveral months; a beggar, whom he had firſt caſually relieved, and whoſe pitiful ſtory having caught his attention, induced him to inquire into the truth of it. Proving partly true was ſufficient to intereſt ſuch a heart as Senſitive's: he recommended him to work for his ſupport, procured him work, and, as he had a family, gave him periodically ſome money. For more than a twelvemonth paſt he had abſconded, leaving his wife and children on the pariſh. "Brookes!" cried Senſitive, looking him full in the face. There is a chord in the frame of man which,

unleſs he be deſcended to a truly diabolical ſtate, never fails to vibrate to the touch of gratitude; a chord which no power but that of Lucifer himſelf ever broke. Brookes, electrified at the ſight and voice of Senſitive, forgetful of his ſituation, ſprang from his horſe, bowed to his benefactor, and ſaid he hoped he ſaw him well. Senſitive entered into converſation with him, Arthurina having gone on to join the party. Never expecting to meet any one who could know him in that part of the country, he had ſtudied no ſtory; and, when Senſitive queſtioned him as to his clothes, horſe, and appearance altogether, he gave a bungling, contradictory account of himſelf. This determined Senſitive to ſecure him. "Mr. Brookes," ſaid he, laying hold of the bridle of his horſe, "you and I muſt have a little farther "talk: return with me; you may ſtill

"find

" find me of ſervice to you: but, if you " make any oppoſition, you will have " cauſe to repent it."—" You can't " charge me with any crime, ſir," ſaid Brookes, with a countenance that betrayed guilt.—" Brookes," replied Senſitive, ſifting him, " I know more than " you ſuppoſe; both you and your ac- " complices are now in my power. I " would rather ſave you than hang you; " but that muſt depend upon yourſelf." Brookes's conſcience aſſiſting this ſtratagem, he exclaimed, with a terrified look; " For God's ſake, ſir, have mercy upon " me!"—" If I find," ſaid Senſitive, " that you make an honeſt and full con- " feſſion, no harm ſhall come to you, on " your determining to forſake your evil " ways, and to return and ſupport your " family; nay, I will exert myſelf to " put you in a good ſituation: but if " you attempt to deceive me, which

" you cannot, I repeat to you, that you " will repent it." Brookes, not doubting that Senſitive was thoroughly acquainted with his iniquitous practices, threw himſelf entirely on his mercy, and confeſſed the criminal reſource by which he was furniſhed with the ſupplies that ſupported him in a ſtate of comparative affluence. How ſurpriſed was Senſitive to find, in this confeſſion, a clue to the hiſtory of the Caſtle Ghoſts! A large ſubterranean chamber, unknown to the inhabitants of Mariton, had been accidently diſcovered by ſome villains, from a flue which led into the kitchen-chimney. It was conſidered as a ſecure place for the purpoſe of coining money and forging bank-notes. All traces of the flue was deſtroyed, and a concealed entrance made into the chamber; the neceſſary implements were conveyed into it in the night time; and for ſome years a gang

a gang of villains had met there at ſtated times to carry on their work. Finding that the country people made the caſtle a common walk, the old device of keeping them away by their ſuperſtitious terrors, was reſorted to; and nitre, gunpowder, and paſteboard figures, produced at a diſtance the effect propoſed. Theſe fire-works were never played off but once at a time, and that never about the period that the buſineſs was going on, being merely intended to keep up the notion of the caſtle being haunted; and, in order that only a few of the lower claſs of people might ſee the apparitions, care was taken to exhibit them when the whole neighbourhood was ſuppoſed to be aſleep, a few excepted, who were previouſly excited, by arts made uſe of, to watch. The report of theſe kept the ſtory ſufficiently alive. The hue and cry that was raiſed had alarmed them,

and

and it was even propoſed to remove; but the difficulty of finding another place, and the danger of tranſporting their implements, had determined them to continue at the caſtle; and perſevering in an occaſional diſplay of ghoſts was held to be a neceſſary expedient. The leader of the gang was a clever man and a gentleman; he kept the accounts, and ſent the money and notes to different agents in different parts of the kingdom, and reckoned very fairly with the aſſociates, who were all getting rich; Brookes for one, who now made no ſcruple to name his accomplices, the chief of whom was a Mr. Strange, a good natured merry man, who had admitted him at the requeſt of an acquaintance, that had been a good while among them.

Senſitive, leading the horſe, and attended by Brookes, followed his friends to the parſonage; and their ſurpriſe at the

the repetition of this tale, was not leſs than his own when he firſt heard it. Brookes, being now ready to comply with all he was deſired to do, undertook to diſcover the entrance to the ſubterranean chamber; and the gentlemen were about to iſſue forth, when Mr. Elton was announced; on which Brookes was deſired to remain with Cæſar till the ſtory was told to that gentleman, whom Aubrey propoſed to take with them. He was greatly ſurpriſed on finding Mr. Cowper and Senſitive at the parſonage; but, as they received him well, and as Arthur ſeemed, in gratitude for his ridding him ſo completely of Lady Sudley, to forget the vain boaſt he had made of kindneſs to his family, he ſoon found himſelf ſupported by his effrontery and good ſpirits, till Aubrey began to relate the ſtory of the caſtle ghoſts, when he appeared confounded. As ſoon as it was con-

concluded, he looked at his watch, without ſaying a word on the ſubject, expreſſed great ſurpriſe at his miſtaking the hour, regretted he could not accompany the party, and requeſted that his horſe might be brought to the door immediately. As he paſſed through the hall, he darted a furious look at Brookes, who was ſitting there, ſprang into his ſaddle, and galloped off, before the aſtoniſhed coiner had time to inform the company at the parſonage, that the gentleman was no other than the agreeable Mr. Strange, the head of the caſtle gang.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XLVI.

Mr. Cowper gives a Reaſon for leaving Mariton. Hints a Change to Aubrey. State of Senſitive's Affairs. His Determination reſpecting Arthurina. Progreſs of Misfortune. New Retrenchment. Revolution among the Maids. Unexpected Offer. Conduct of the Cambridges. Duns. Love and Poverty.

EVIDENT as were the vices of Elton, not one of the party at the parſonage conceived him ſo ſunk as to have become the aſſociate of the loweſt of men in ſo deſperate a game; and, had not his manner of departing corroborated the fact, Brookes would have had ſome difficulty in obtaining belief. It was now but too clear: information was there-

therefore immediately given to a neighbouring magiſtrate of the whole affair, and tranſmitted to the public office in London. It was agreed, that the beſt plan would have been to have kept the matter ſecret till the next time of the meeting of the culprits; but that was rendered impracticable by the unexpected viſit from Elton; and all that could now be attempted was to take up thoſe accomplices whoſe places of abode were known to Brookes. Even in this they failed; for Elton meeting one of the gang as he left Mariton, intelligence was immediately given to all, and none were apprehended. Senſitive's diſcovery had one good effect, however; not only were the villains for ever routed from the caſtle, but the paſſage to the ſubterranean chamber being ſhown by Brookes, the whole country came to viſit it, and the villagers ſuſpected that they

they were miſtaken in the belief of ghoſts. The Aubreys were highly gratified with this occurrence; and the company of their friends baniſhed diſappointment and regret. Mrs. Aubrey was extremly pleaſed with Mrs. Smyth. Arthur and Harriet were ſo ſtrictly upon their guard, that not a ſingle word tending to love eſcaped their lips; but how pleaſed they were with each other was not to be concealed from experienced eyes; and Mr. Cowper, being before aware of the danger, reſolved not to prolong a viſit, which he deemed neceſſary to make, but which it was as neceſſary to ſhorten: he therefore candidly told Aubrey the reaſon of his reſolution, and Aubrey as candidly told him his own fears; and it was agreed that, amiable as they were, a marriage between them, or even the encouragement of the thought,

thought, would be the height of imprudence.

Mr. Cowper, notwithſtanding, extended his ſtay to a fortnight, during which he had frequent converſations with Aubrey on his ſituation, on economy, and on the benefit that might be derived from the cultivation of land; an employment neither inconſiſtent with his paſtoral duties, nor unworthy his ſacred profeſſion. In the courſe of theſe converſations, he more than once, however, ſaid to Aubrey: "My good friend, I "ſee that this curacy, though one of the "beſt in England, will ruin you; you "will do better in changing for a poorer "one: you ought to keep the change "in view. The manner of living here "and your feelings are in a conſpiracy "againſt your peace." Aubrey felt the juſtneſs of the remark, and wiſhed that he had the curacy of Melford. "I wiſh "you

" you had," ſaid Mr. Cowper; " and I " do not ſee any thing improbable in it: " the preſent Mr. Grey is advanced in " years, and ought to have an aſſiſtant; " I will ſound him upon it: but I fore- " ſee a difficulty about a houſe; for he " is too much attached to his pariſh " ever to relinquiſh the duty of it, while " he is able to aſcend his pulpit. I " would build a cottage for you myſelf, " but that I have been borrowing large " ſums of money for theſe two years " paſt, and advancing my own funds, " with a view of ſaving Charles Senſi- " tive, who has a heart worthy of every " good man's care. I gave you a hint of " what I was about, when I was in town, " where I have again lately been, un- " known to him, on buſineſs relative to " his affairs, which kept me from meet- " ing you at Leiceſter when Dr. Searle " died." Aubrey here expreſſed the greateſt

greateſt affection and eſteem for Senſitive, and confided in Mr. Cowper the propoſals he had made reſpecting Arthurina. "I obſerve his attachment," ſaid Mr. Cowper, "and it is another proof "of his diſintereſted ſenſibility. He be- "lieves himſelf worth upwards of twenty "thouſand pounds, and he now knows "that your daughters have no proſpect "of a portion: ſuch an affection de- "ſerves to be rewarded; but you muſt "judge for yourſelf. If he ſave five "thouſand pounds out of his fortune, it "will be the utmoſt; and what is the "intereſt of that ſum for perſons brought "up as he and Arthurina have been? "In the courſe of eighteen months or "two years after he came of age, Senſi- "tive entered into four ſecurities for "different men, with whom he was in "habits of friendſhip, if I may ſay ſo, "but who were ruined at the time, and

"only

" only held up their heads on the money
" his credit enabled them to borrow.
" The largeſt of theſe is for ſeven thou-
" ſand pounds, two are for five, and one
" for three, making together twenty;
" almoſt, if not altogether, as much as
" his eſtate is worth. Theſe ſecurities
" I have managed, by ſtating the caſe to
" my friends, to take up; and that for
" ſeven thouſand became due laſt week. I
" know that the Principal has fled; and
" I am every moment in expectation of
" receiving a letter here from my agent,
" informing me of non-payment. I
" ſhall then open the buſineſs to Senſi-
" tive, and ſhow him what I have done.
" The other ſecurities fall due in the
" courſe of the ſummer, and are all in
" the ſame predicament; they will cer-
" tainly all come againſt him."—" I do
" not ſee," ſaid Aubrey, " that he can
" ſave a ſhilling."—" Yes," replied
Cowper,

Cowper, " I have contrived to ſave
" him five thouſand pounds in this
" manner: I heard of theſe tranſactions
" ſoon after they took place, and at the
" ſame time that they were uſurious
" contracts; of which I took advantage.
" I was well known to the perſon who
" lent the money; for ſeven he had only
" given five, for five three, and for
" three two. Uſury is not ſo odious
" where lenders fairly run great riſks;
" and, in ſome inſtances, we know that
" the law conſiders riſks. But, where
" there is no hazard at all, it is infamous:
" in this caſe there was none. I expa-
" tiated ſo earneſtly on the ſubject with
" the lender, and ſo perſuaded him that
" I would take ſteps to render the con-
" tracts void, that I prevailed upon him
" to aſſign them to me, for his own mo-
" ney and five hundred pounds over: ſo
" that, inſtead of twenty thouſand pounds,

" Senſi-

" Senſitive will have only between thir-
" teen and fourteen to pay; and, allow-
" ing for his having got rid of two or
" three thouſand, I reckon he may ſave
" about five altogether. This is ſome-
" thing, and muſt conſole him for the
" loſs of his eſtate; for it muſt be ſold
" to refund the money I borrowed, as it
" is the only means I have. After all,
" I am not certain that you ſhould object
" to his marriage with your daughter:
" if Senſitive will make uſe of his ta-
" lents, he may maintain her in com-
" fort, and perhaps in affluence." Au-
brey lamented Senſitive's misfortune, and ſaid, that he ſhould leave it entirely to himſelf to pay his addreſſes to Arthu-rina, or diſcontinue his attentions, as he judged beſt.

At the concluſion of this converſation, Mr. Cowper received the letter he expected, which he ſhowed to Aubrey;

and ſhortly after being joined by Senſitive, he entered delicately on the ſubject, knowing how eaſily his nerves were wrung. To excuſe his ſpeaking to him before Aubrey, he noticed their friendſhip, and obſerved that they had juſt been converſing about him with the livelieſt intereſt. Poor Senſitive was ſtruck with amazement and horror at the intelligence he received from Mr. Cowper; and ſo little was he prepared for the blow, that he had not even kept in mind the time at which the debt became due. He thought it impoſſible that men, whom he had ſaved by his credit, ſhould be deliberately the cauſe of his ruin. Too well convinced, however, by what he heard, he ſhuddered as much at thought of the villainy that contaminated mankind as at his own misfortune; but his execration of the wretch who betrayed him was weak in compariſon with his

his admiration of the virtue that was so active in saving and in serving. After the first emotion of surprise was over, Sensitive, with a warmth that evidenced his sincerity, assured Mr. Cowper that he should ever estimate his loss small when compared to his gain; for that money might be accumulated, but such a friend was not to be purchased by the largest fortune. A cordial and unreserved conversation followed, in which, after some hesitation arising from his unfeigned modesty, Sensitive thanked Mr. Cowper for the hint of turning his attainment in painting to the purposes of fortune. It was an art of which any gentleman might be proud, and the proper study of which tended to enlarge the mind, and to plant in it those sentiments that distinguish a gentleman. To Aubrey he applied for guidance respecting Arthurina: "I regret," said he, "the

" loſs I am doomed to ſuffer; I doubly
" regret it, becauſe my eſtate was patri-
" monial; but my greateſt ſorrow on the
" occaſion ariſes from my being deprived
" of the power of being uſeful to you. I
" am now a poor man; but if you think
" there remains enough, aided by my
" exertions ——" Here Aubrey in-
terrupted him, ſaying: " Think and
" act as you pleaſe, my dear Senſitive:
" I think you rich enough; and, if you
" are of the ſame opinion, obtain Arthu-
" rina's conſent, and you ſhall have
" mine."—" I believe," replied he,
" that I have made ſome progreſs in her
" affection; but I have never yet ſpoken
" to her of love, nor will I now till my
" fate is aſcertained, till I know preciſely
" what I can call my own, and till I have
" tried the probability of my ſucceſs
" with the public." Mr. Cowper ap-
plauded his reſolution: " My worthy
" young

"young friend," said he, "I do not "doubt you will do well; but it is a "pity that all young men coming into "the world with such feelings as you "are possessed of, are not made ac- "quainted with your fate; for few may "have a resource like yours. The ear- "lier men are taught to connect virtue "with reason, to associate the head with "the heart, the more efficient and the "more extensive will their benevolence "be."—"Oh! my dear Mr. Cowper," replied Sensitive, "rather wish that my "example may be concealed, lest its ef- "fect be to banish benevolence from "the heart of man."—"With those," said Mr. Cowper, "who have no seeds "of it in the heart, your example might "serve as an excuse for the want of it; "but, with those where it teems, it "would, I think, only serve to mode- "rate the sensibility of their nature;

" and, far from indiſpoſing them to kind
" actions, would but excite an attention
" neceſſary to preſerve them from being
" diſqualified to indulge through life in a
" pleaſure ſo amiable in the ſight of
" God and man. A man without be-
" nevolence, I allow, to be worſe than a
" brute; but a man who incautiouſly
" ſtops a ſource of it, and that one of
" the moſt conſiderable, is not innocent,
" though he is more to be pitied." To this propoſition Senſitive aſſented with a ſigh, and again declared his reſolution to ſtrain every nerve to repair the effects of his folly. The impreſſion left on his mind by the intelligence he had received from Mr. Cowper was not to be concealed; he was ſenſible too that he damped the ſpirits of his friends; and he determined to leave them for the preſent. Aſſuring Mr. Cowper that he ſhould be ready to co-operate with him reſpecting the mea-

ſures

ſures for the reimburſement of his friends whenever it became neceſſary, and telling Aubrey that he was going to prepare his houſe for the execution of his deſign, and to ſee if it be poſſible to obtain any ſecurity for the debts not yet due, he bade his friends farewell, and ſet out for town. Mr. Cowper ſtaid but two days after him, during which nothing particular occurred, except that, in converſing with Aubrey reſpecting Arthur, he approved the idea ſtarted by the latter himſelf, of trying his fortune in the Weſt Indies; a ſtep which Aubrey ſaid he would conſider, and which, if it were adopted, his friend promiſed to ſecond with all his influence with a gentleman of large fortune in the Weſt Indies. Mrs. Smyth and Harriet, in taking leave of the Aubreys, ſhed tears, and warmly regretted the great diſtance between their places of reſidence. The Aubreys,

on their part, were equally affectionate; and Arthur, in bidding adieu to Harriet, thought that it was for ever.

The ſummer advanced, and faſhionable people leaving town for the country, Mariton was recruited by ſome families: among others, the Spicers returned, and the elegances of Spicer-Hall attracted all the country. From theſe feſtivities the Aubreys were of courſe excluded; but every art was uſed by the donors to poiſon the minds of the company againſt them, and not without ſucceſs. The nature of Aubrey's loſs was better underſtood than when he firſt came, and his late diſappointment was made the ſubject of ridicule. He continued reſolute in not giving dinners, and he was ſoon dropped by thoſe who loved good ones, and who thought much of the happineſs of life conſiſted in giving and receiving them. Before the ſummer

was

was over it was very evident that Spicer-Hall afforded more gratification than the Parſonage; and all attentions to the latter precluded intimacy at the former. The Aubreys, taught by experience, underſtood this perfectly well; they had within themſelves a happineſs, "which "paſſeth ſhow;" and the aberration of ſummer friends was not now a misfortune of ſuch magnitude as to diſturb it: but it was ſeriouſly diſturbed by obſerving that, in ſpite of all their endeavours, their expences greatly exceeded their income, and that the perſons to whom Aubrey was in debt began to ſhow great impatience for payment. They ſcrutinized their mode of living, to ſee what could yet be reformed, and could diſcover nothing that appeared ſuperfluous; yet ſomething muſt be curtailed, or their expences would never be reduced to their receipts. After much conſideration,

Mrs. Aubrey thought, as they never had dinner company, that Nanny the cook might alſo diſcharge the houſemaid's part; and Mrs. Miller being conſulted, thought ſo too, particularly as ſhe would herſelf aſſiſt in making the beds, and putting the bed-rooms to rights. There was, however, another perſon to be conſulted on the occaſion, and that was Nanny, who entirely differed in opinion with her miſtreſs and Mrs. Miller, and could not be convinced of the practicability of ſuch an arrangement; and, as Mrs. Aubrey continued determined upon it, ſhe gave her warning. In a few days, Patty informed her miſtreſs, that, if her ſiſter Nanny went away, ſhe muſt go too: to which Mrs. Aubrey, angry and hurt on the occaſion, aſſented.

She had hardly done this, when the houſemaid deſired to ſpeak with her. This unexpected conduct of the ſervants

vexed

vexed her extremely; for they had always been treated with the greateſt kindneſs; and that all ſhould now ſuddenly forſake her, becauſe it was out of her power to retain all, was vile: yet ſhe could not wonder at a want of delicacy in perſons of their ſtation, when thoſe who had the advantages of education and fortune had proved themſelves ſo deficient in it. "Well, Betty," ſaid ſhe to the maid, on her entering the room, "you "too are come to give me warning?" —"Warning, ma'am!" cried Betty."— "I ſhall leſs wonder at it," continued Mrs. Aubrey, "in you than in Nanny "and Patty, becauſe you were the per- "ſon I thought myſelf obliged to part "with; I ſay obliged, Betty, for I "ſhould never have propoſed it but "from a ſenſe of duty."—"If you "pleaſe to turn me away, ma'am, I muſt "go," replied Betty; "but, till you

"do, I never will leave you. I came, "ma'am, to tell you, if you pleaſe, "ſince Nanny and Patty have both giv- "en you warning, that I think I can "manage myſelf to do all the work "without having any body elſe."— "My good girl," ſaid Mrs. Aubrey, "you have indeed ſurpriſed me, and "moſt delightfully; but can it be? "You are neither accuſtomed to cook- "ing nor the care of cows, even ſup- "poſing the whole work of the houſe "were not too much for you."—"It "is not too much, ma'am," ſaid Betty; "and in my laſt place, before I came "to Mr. Dodſon, I lived with a farmer, "maid of all works. I could cook "plain victuals very well then, and, by "helping Nanny, I have ſince learned "to ſtew, and to do up a number of "kickſkaws: I think, ma'am, if you "would try me, I ſhould do very well:

"at leaſt I would uſe my beſt endea-
"vours; and as for the cows, and mak-
"ing a little butter, why, la! ma'am,
"what is't?"—"How came you then
"not to undertake the dairy at firſt?"
—"Oh, dear! ma'am," ſaid Betty,
"there is a great deal of difference.
"You was then quite ſtrange to me, and
"I thought if I did my work as houſe-
"maid for houſemaid's wages it was all
"that I ought to do: but now, ma'am,
"that I know you ſo well, and love you
"and all the family, I would do all
"work for you without wages, till I
"could not ſtand any longer." Such emanations of ſoul are independent of fortune or ſtation; they are admirable wherever they appear, and go to the heart. Charmed with Betty, Mrs. Aubrey aſſured her of her attachment, and immediately agreed to make the experiment, ſaying, at the ſame time, that

ſhe

ſhe thought it would be neceſſary to have a girl to help her.

Another proof of ſoul with which the Aubreys were delighted was given by the Cambridges: in proportion as others became remiſs in attention at the Parſonage, they increaſed their aſſiduities with unvarying reſpect. Frequent intercourſe endeared them to one another; the friendſhip that took place helped to mitigate the mortifications which the Aubreys were doomed to ſuffer; and, through the ſummer and autumn, diverted their ſenſibility from objects too well calculated to wound it. Theſe objects did not conſiſt in the ſullen glances of Miſs Spicer, or the indifference of the undiſturbed conſumers of the inventions of luxury; but in the repeated applications and indelicate remarks of perſons to whoſe remonſtrances and reproaches they were morally bound

to

to ſubmit. Every creditor is not formed, like Senſitive, to hold his head in ſun-beams, and his foot on ſtorms*: Aubrey's heart was ſeldom gladdened by the appearance either of the face or of the hand-writing of his creditors; dun after dun knocked at his gate, letter after letter demanded payment, when payment was out of his power: he ſaw thoſe who came, and anſwered thoſe who wrote, without giving ſatisfaction. One or two exceptions there were: his taylor, who had ſerved him for many years previous to his misfortunes, never would ſend in his bill: and Mr. Browne, to whom he was indebted for medicine and attendance during Arthur's illneſs, and for occaſional care of the family, would not

* "The creditor, whoſe appearance gladdens "the heart of a debtor, may hold his head in ſun-"beams, and his foot on ſtorms."

LAVATER.

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hear of an account. Once when Aubrey preſſed him on the ſubject, he ſaid: "Pray never let this trouble your "thoughts; the whole is eraſed from "my books, and ſhall be from my me-"mory." This worthy man ſpoke the truth; he had eraſed the entries made in his books, and he baniſhed the ſubject from his thoughts. Aubrey reſpected and loved Mr. Browne; but this generoſity was productive of as great pain, though of a different nature, as the implacability of his other creditors. Inability to ſatisfy wrung his heart; a ſenſe of injuſtice embittered his reflexions, and rendered the very pulpit a terror to him. There, it was his duty to preach againſt the very vice into which he had fallen; and he felt that it was ſullied by the diſgrace of the preacher. Conſcious, however, that he never meant to be unjuſt; that, far from wronging any

any man designedly, he would pour out his blood to serve his fellow-creatures, and that he lived as frugally as possible, his days passed not without some consolatory views of his love of rectitude; and the union, talents, and cheerfulness of his family, combined to relieve the oppressive load of debt, and to comfort and gladden his heart at times, in spite of duns, reproach, and rudeness. The Aubreys completely refuted the adage of "Love "flying out of the window when Po-"verty came in at the door:" the husband and wife, the parent and child, the master and servant, secured him in his several forms; and Love, too much charmed with his own power to fly from the view of it, ran to the door to embrace the spectre Poverty, and, with the first kiss, smoothed her rugged brow: they agreed, for once in a way, to

to dwell together; and Poverty promiſed to ſmile with Love, if Love would ſometimes groan with Poverty.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XLVII.

Determination reſpecting Arthur. Houſehold Affairs. One of the Conſequences of Debt. Self-Reproach. Cauſe of Arthur's Voyage being Poſtponed.

LOVE was ſoon doomed to the ſevereſt pangs. The Aubreys conceived that no misfortune in life could be compared to that of ſeparation; it was rending nature, it was tearing off the limbs from the body. The neceſſity of Arthur's leaving his family to become an adventurer in diſtant regions of the globe, preſſed hard upon the hearts of the whole group, and to eat a dry cruſt and drink water was thought to be comparative happineſs. Arthur ſhared theſe feelings, but

but he had other feelings likewiſe, which awakened in his mind ſentiments of a firmer caſt. A paſſive exiſtence was not to be endured in any ſituation of life, and ſtill leſs in one that called imperiouſly for activity: to remain a burden and a clog upon the efforts of a beloved family, who were ſtruggling to preſerve juſtice with the world, inſtead of ſtraining every nerve to aſſiſt them to ſtruggle with honour, and if poſſible to extricate them from the difficulties which were ſtarting up before them, ill ſuited the noble ſpirit of an ingenuous and manly youth. "No," ſaid he, "it muſt not be. To "enjoy ſuch love, I muſt not be unde- "ſerving of it. I will, I muſt leave "you. Pray, my dear Sir, inform Mr. "Cowper that the matter is decided, "and let him recommend me as he pro- "miſed."—"I cannot," cried Mrs. Aubrey, "bear the thought of your "going

" going to the Weſt Indies. Cannot " ſomething be thought of for him in " England, Aubrey?"—" As we have " not means to enable him to purſue a " profeſſion," replied Aubrey, " Eng- " land preſents no hope of ſucceſs. In " the Weſt Indies I underſtand, that " under the patronage of a man of power, " there are many certain roads open to " fortune."—" By all means the Weſt " Indies, Sir," ſaid Arthur, " I would " rather die than be toiling at home " for a pittance that could be of no ſer- " vice to you. Abroad, with the know- " ledge I already have of figures, I ſhall " ſoon make myſelf a man of buſineſs, " and buſineſs will make me a man of " fortune: be aſſured my dear mother, I " will put my ſhoulder to the wheel, and " have you all out of the ſlough in leſs " time than you may ſuppoſe: the girls " ſhall have fortunes, and I will teach Ar-

" thur

" thur-William to make one. We have " only to look forward a little. Beſides, " I ought to ſee the world; I ought to ſee " mankind in different ſtates and ſitua- " tions of life. Call my abſence my " travels, and you will be reconciled to " it; and if I do not bring you an ac- " count of France and Italy, I will of " men and manners, of ſeas and climates, " of liberty and ſlavery, of ſugar canes " and coffee."—" The climate! the " climate!" exclaimed Mrs. Aubrey. " My dear mother," ſaid Arthur, tak- ing her hand, and preſſing it warmly to his boſom, " my father has taught " me to rely on Providence; I will en- " deavour to deſerve his care, and to " return to you: but Mariton is not our " home; if it be his will that we ſhould " meet in another world, oh! we ſhall " be ſtill happier there even than we " have been in this." Tears came into

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the eyes of Mrs. Aubrey and his ſiſters. "I did not mean to make you ſhed tears," cried he, his own ſtarting at the ſame time; "if you don't help me I ſhall "have no reſolution; my heart is ſo "tied to you, I ſhall forget the ſhame "of ſloth in the ſweetneſs of your "ſmiles."—"But the Weſt Indies!" ſaid his mother: "I am but too well "acquainted with that part of the world "from your grandfather's account of it, "not to dread it for you in every reſpect. "Though his property was in the Weſt-"Indies, and he obliged to be frequent-"ly there, yet he never would take me "with him, or ſuffer the thought of "my going thither."—"Yes," ſaid Arthur, "but there is a great deal of "difference between a young man, and "a fine girl brought up as you were. I "have not a doubt that I ſhall eſcape "like many others, and then you will be

"happy

"happy that you consented to my go-
"ing." Mrs. Aubrey could not consent heartily, but after a little more conversation on the necessity of Arthur's taking an active part in life, she ceased to oppose the plan, and Aubrey wrote to Mr. Cowper requesting him to apply immediately to his friend.

Meanwhile, time passed on at the parsonage, divided between the enjoyment of present delights and the anticipation of evil. The household affairs were well managed by Betty and Mrs. Miller. Nanny and Patty were not even missed, except in the expenditure of the kitchen, which was so reduced, as to create a fair suspicion that the sisters had not been faithful in their trust. The most painful duty that occurred during the summer, fell chiefly on Emily and Arthurina, who, in consequence of an answer from Mr. Cowper, bestowed some

ſome time in the preparation of a ſtock of linen for their brother, to be ready for the ſailing of the Chriſtmas ſhips. Aubrey's credit with his tradeſmen gradually declined, till at laſt, towards the end of the ſummer, his family could obtain nothing but for prompt payment; he was therefore under the neceſſity of huſbanding the ſtipend he received from Dr. Bowes, and its inadequacy to the uſual ſupplies alarmed and afflicted him.

Impatient of repeated procraſtinations, ſeveral of Aubrey's creditors began to make their demands in a decided tone: two had actually commenced actions againſt him, and at length awakened an apprehenſion that his perſon was not ſecure. He was one morning in the month of November, expreſſing this apprehenſion to Mrs. Aubrey, and preparing his family againſt a ſurpriſe which

might overwhelm them with deſpair, when Cæſar coming into the ſitting room, told him he was wanted. He immediately went into the parlour, where he ſaw two men, to one of whom, named Crichton, he had rendered great ſervices, having been the means of relieving his family from a dreadful ſtate of diſtreſs. "Hah! Crichton," ſaid he, "I am "glad to ſee you. Is there any thing "I can do for you?" The man ſtood at a reſpectful diſtance without ſpeaking, till Aubrey aſked him if he had any thing particular to ſay to him; "Sir," replied he, "I am very unfortunate in "being obliged by the nature of my "duty to—to—to perform my duty, "Sir."—"What is your duty?" ſaid Aubrey: on which the man put a ſlip of paper into his hand. Aubrey was not unprepared to find it a writ, but he was ſurpriſed to find it in the poſſeſſion

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of Crichton, who now informed him that he had been lately appointed a ſheriff's officer. He ſtill kept at a diſtance, and had not power to complete the arreſt by touching his benefactor. Aubrey ſeeing this, went forward and took him by the hand. Shocked at being a priſoner, he was extremely anxious to keep the knowledge of it from his family till he had taken ſome ſtep to extricate himſelf, and he deſired Crichton to ſend away his follower. This was immediately done, and Aubrey diſpatched Cæſar for Mr. Browne. In the mean time he took Crichton into the garden and paſſed before the ſitting-room, that the family might ſee who was with him. The worthy Mr. Browne returned with Cæſar: he was well known to Crichton, who, without the ſlighteſt heſitation, took his word that he ſhould have ſufficient bail for the debt, which was a hundred and fifty

pounds, and saying he would call upon Mr. Browne, gladly hastened from the Parsonage.

For some time Aubrey kept this circumstance a secret from Mrs. Aubrey and his children, but it preyed upon his heart, and his absences of mind rendered them wretched. He made a statement of his debts, which now amounted to upwards of two thousand pounds, and he saw no means by which he could possibly hope ever to discharge them: nor had he reason to flatter himself that his creditors would make allowance for his inadvertence, or be satisfied with his possession of principles which he had not had virtue and foresight enough to draw forth into practice, so that his breast was torn at once by compunction for injustice, and by the horrid images of the dearest objects of his heart, involved in the consequences of imprisonment and want.

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The load was too heavy for his heart; it was the first he had ever attempted to bear without the assistance of his Emily, and he was at length constrained to give vent to his sorrow. "Yes Emily," said he to Mrs. Aubrey, after giving an account of his arrest and bail, "this is "our situation, from which I know not "how we can be delivered but by Pro-"vidence. I shall now be soon called "upon to surrender myself in order to "exonerate my bail; and in consequence "of the other actions against me, all the "comforts of life will be torn from you. "Yes, my love, I have been apprized "that executions are intended to be "thrown in on the Parsonage. Oh! "that we had had a resolution like "Cowper's! that we had been wiser "than to live upon hope! that we had "faced poverty in its terrifying form, "rather than have suffered it to over-

" take us with diſhoneſty at its ſide!
" Clear of debt, we might have lived
" happily on bread and water, which
" will now be rendered bitter by the
" rememberance of the wrong we have
" done."—" My dear Sir," ſaid Arthur,
" you were deceived by a baſe pre-
" tender to friendſhip: on his head be
" the conſequence of his deceit, your
" mind is pure of deſigned wrong.
" Diſhoneſt! You, Sir, diſhoneſt! Oh
" no. Your creditors, at leaſt thoſe
" whoſe paſſions do not abſorb their rea-
" ſon, may be hurt, may blame you in
" ſome reſpects, but cannot charge you
" with diſhoneſty."—"My boy," replied
Aubrey, " I ſhould have been wiſer
" than to live on hope. Never, never,
" be tempted to contract a debt, of
" which the payment is not as ſure as
" the cauſe for which it is contracted.
" Avoid it, my ſon, more earneſtly than
" death,

" death, the thought of which is ſweet,
" when compared with the bitter re-
" flections accompanying debt." Having expatiated ſome time on the horrors of debt, and ſaid that it was his intention to live if poſſible on half of his ſtipend, that the other half might be offered to his creditors, to prevent their proceeding againſt him with rigour, Aubrey adverted to Arthur's ſituation: " The time," ſaid he, " is come for you to leave us,
" my ſon; the ſhips are now ſailing for
" the Weſt-Indies, but your departure
" muſt be delayed, for I have not the
" means of enabling you to go."—
" Well, my dear father," ſaid Arthur,
" I can ſtay till ſpring; it is perhaps
" better. I ſhould be wretched to leave
" you in your preſent dilemma: in a
" few months matters may wear a fairer
" aſpect. Your creditors may be ſoften-
" ed by your reſolution to put by a part

" of your pittance for the discharge of " your debts, and I shall be rewarded " for sharing your distress, by seeing you " before I go, out of the dangers which " threaten you at present."—" It is the " will of God, my dear Arthur," said Aubrey, " and to that, be it what it may, " we will submit." The delay of Arthur's departure till the spring, was a cordial to the hearts of Mrs. Aubrey, Emily, and Arthurina, to whom no misfortune seemed so replete with wretchedness, as the loss of so beloved an object.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

Melford. Converſation between Mr. Cowper and Edmund. Unexpected Reſult of it. The Power of Fancy. Mariton Parſonage.

WHILE theſe unhappy ſcenes were paſſing at Mariton, Mr. Cowper and the Smyths were not forgetful of their friends. Seldom a day paſſed without their being made the ſubject of converſation; and how to be of uſe to them was ever in Mr. Cowper's view. He had ſpoken of Aubrey to Mr. Grey, who was long unwilling to think that he required aſſiſtance in the diſcharge of his duty; but, though his mind was unſubdued by time, his nerves were convinced, by the approach of winter, that a Curate was

neceſſary; and obſerving to his friend Cowper that he felt himſelf called upon to yield to the progreſs of nature, he begged him to make the appointment, mentioning a hundred a year as the ſalary he ſhould annex to it, the Curate having to provide himſelf with a houſe.

As ſoon as Mr. Cowper was ſure of the curacy of Melford for Aubrey, he reſolved to diſpatch Edmund to Mariton with the tidings; and to render the commiſſion ſtill more delightful to his nephew, he had a converſation with him previous to his journey reſpecting the Aubreys, which opened an unexpected proſpect of happineſs. "You are now, "my dear Edmund," ſaid Mr. Cowper, "arrived at that period of life, which "your underſtanding and ſelf-command, "rather than your years, denote to be "the commencement of manhood. I "believe it has been accelerated by your "purſuits,

" purſuits, and by the confidence which
" I have placed in you from your infancy.
" The events of my life are all well known
" to you; my firſt dreams of affluence
" and bliſs; my ſubſequent real miſery
" and ſtruggles with poverty; my pre-
" ſent comfortable ſtate of competence,
" earned by my own care and *your* aſ-
" ſiſtance. Our labour becomes eaſier
" every day by the increaſe of our
" means; but it muſt be continued;
" or, inſtead of advancing in proſperity,
" we ſhall relapſe to want and diſtreſs.
" But of this there is no fear: you, how-
" ever, muſt now take the labouring oar;
" and *I* muſt aſſiſt *you*. I do not put it
" into your hands, becauſe I am glad to get
" rid of it myſelf, but becauſe it is an in-
" ſtrument of happineſs which will ſweeten
" every agreeable occurrence of your
" life, and rob adverſe ones of their bit-
" terneſs. A thorn was planted at

" your birth, my boy; but ſucceſsful em-
" ployment has blunted every point, and
" will through life. I am glad, beyond
" expreſſion, to obſerve the greatneſs of
" your ſoul, which diſdains a fortune ſo
" unjuſtly withheld from you. I know
" not whether it would not rather be a
" calamity than a happineſs were your
" father now to alter your happy me-
" diocrity for unſettled expectations."
Here Edmund aſſured his uncle that he could never conſider any other than he as his father. " How he has contrived
" to evade me ſo long after his behaviour
" at Okeham," continued Cowper, " is
" inexplicable; yet I am not ſurpriſed at
" it. I was then determined to purſue
" him through the Courts of Juſtice;
" but, after all, we ſhould perhaps be
" only giving up eaſe for trouble and
" vexation. At leaſt, for the preſent, we
" will drop the idea, and proceed as if
" there

" there were no such connexion on earth.
" Then, my dear Edmund, I hope that
" the arrangement I have been contem-
" plating will give you pleasure. You
" must become the manager, and of
" course the proprietor of our little
" property. If I have a gratification in
" thinking that you will be master of it
" after my death, I take a degree of ro-
" mantic delight in anticipating it in the
" close of my life; and it is thus I sum
" up all my remaining views on earth:
" to see our lands improving and increas-
" ing as yours; your mother and me
" supported and blessed by you and your
" sister; Harriet provided for; and you
" settled for life." The last expression struck Edmund particularly; yet he was uncertain what it meant. He looked at his uncle, as if for an explanation. " Harriet," continued Mr. Cowper, " is in a manner already pro-

" vided

" vided for; thanks to our fainted
" friend Dr. Searle. I have devoted his
" legacy of a thouſand pounds to her.
" It will be enough if ſhe continue
" ſingle; but, as ſhe may be prevailed
" upon to marry, you muſt conſider
" yourſelf bound to pay her another
" thouſand when ſhe does; and of
" courſe you will in the mean time pro-
" vide for the contingency. Theſe are
" the only conditions with which your
" little eſtate ſhall be incumbered; and it
" is now equal to the terms, and much
" more: it is equal to the ſupport of a
" family of your own." Edmund's looks beſpoke the anxiety which this language excited in his mind. " Where there is
" proviſion for a family," proceeded Cowper, " I love early marriages: hearts
" aſſimilate, the huſband and the wife
" partake the ſame events, purſue the
" ſame trains of thought, grow together,
" and

" and become really one. My advice to " you, Edmund, is to become a husband " as soon as you can: with respect to " you, it is now the only thing I have " to wish." Edmund's heart palpitated with contending fears and hopes. Could his uncle mean a marriage that might increase his prosperous management of the property, or would he encourage one where not a shilling could be looked for? He was embarrassed and silent. Mr. Cowper saw what was passing in his mind; he was no stranger to Edmund's attachment; and he was happy to turn it to the accomplishment of his views for Aubrey; for, in pondering on his fate, he had, in imagination, married his nephew to Emily, and Sensitive to Arthurina; and had thrown Arthur into Fortune's way under the guidance of his West-India friend. " It is not for me, " Edmund," continued he, " to direct

" the heart to; love your choice muſt " be your own: I ſhall only hint that I " attach as little importance to a woman's " fortune as you can. I have no objec- " tion to it; but when there is enough " on the huſband's ſide, I think it a mat- " ter of indifference; and I ſhould pre- " fer ſome girls in their every-day clothes " to others with thirty thouſand pounds; " for inſtance, an Emily Aubrey to a Miſs " Spicer." Edmund, tranſported, threw himſelf into his uncle's arms, crying, " Oh Sir! Oh my uncle! Oh my fa- " ther! You know my heart; I ſee you " know my heart." When his rapture moderated, he avowed his paſſion for Emily; and, having received his uncle's conſent to ſolicit her hand, converſed with him on his plans for the Aubreys, felt his heart ſwell with love and benevolence, and expreſſed his impatience to accompliſh his uncle's god-like deſigns.

" Aubrey,"

"Aubrey," ſaid Mr. Cowper, "muſt "be conſiderably embarraſſed; but to "what extent I do not exactly know. "He will certainly want ſome aſſiſtance "in removing; and I am very much "afraid, as we have heard nothing of "your friend Arthur's preparation for "his voyage, that his father has not been "able to furniſh the means. Now, I "do not know what I can do better with "the other thouſand pounds, left at my "diſpoſal by Dr. Searle, than appropri-"ate a part of the ſum by way of loan to "Aubrey; I ſay *loan*, for we muſt now "act with double delicacy towards him. "You ſhall therefore carry with you "five hundred pounds; and, if that "ſhould not be enough, he ſhall have as "much of the remainder as may be "wanted."—"Noble, generous man!" exclaimed Edmund, "God will bleſs "you here, and hereafter."

At

At the conclusion of this conversation, it was resolved that Edmund should set off for Mariton without delay, and without apprizing his friends of his journey. His joy at first was boundless, but he suddenly became thoughtful; and Mr. Cowper, being at a loss to account for it, requested he would explain it. "Oh "Sir!" said he, "the selfishness of my "rapture made me forget for a moment "the untowardness of my friend's lot." —"I understand you," said Cowper, "and your feelings do you honour. It "cannot be, my dear boy: but, to re- "lieve you as much as I can, tell your "friend from me to be prudent, and I "think it highly probable that your sis- "ter may one day or other be his; but "he is going to the West-Indies; I will "have no engagement made at present." —"I thank you, in his name, my dear "Uncle," replied Edmund, "for the

"hope

"hope alone, and I answer for his being "satisfied with it. I shall now set off "with delight." Loaded with kind remembrances, and affectionate messages, he took his leave of Melford. His uncle drove him in his one-horse chaise to Gloucester, whence he travelled in a public carriage as far as Loughborough; there he hired a porter to carry his portmanteau to Mariton, setting out, however, so as to precede him in arriving at the parsonage.

How did Edmund's heart glow as he drew near to a mansion which contained so large a portion of his affection! The occurrences of his former visit came all fresh to his memory; his rambles with the family; his rides with Arthur; his fall into the river; Emily's plunge after him; his hopeless passion. To these images succeeded the still more delightful ones of his unexpected appearance;

of

of his communicating the joyful tidings reſpecting the curacy of Melford; of his preſenting the means of effecting a removal; of his daring to talk of love to Emily. When he came within ſight of the houſe, his fancy penetrated the walls, ran through the apartments, where utility and taſte combined to afford convenience and to charm the eye, and grouped the beloved inhabitants in that pleaſant well-remembered room, where he had ſo often liſtened, enchanted, to the voice of Emily. Her he placed at her beautiful fine-toned piano, harmonizing extempore melody; which, though rapt in thought, ſhe ſwelled occaſionally with her own vocal tones, at times deſiſting and again falling in as if by accident: he had more than once obſerved her thus. He ſeated Arthur in a reclining poſture, on the ſopha, liſtening to her ſpontaneous ſtrains; Arthurina, drawing at the table, had put down

down her pencil to attend more fixedly to the heavenly ſounds with which her ſiſter had, unconſciouſly, attracted the admiration of the whole party; Aubrey and Mrs. Aubrey were ſitting by each other, near a chearful fire, gazing at the lovely muſician; and Arthur-William, examining a large map on the carpet, had his finger at the place he was engaged in, while his eyes and ears were all Emily's. Thus beguiling the way with the fairy pictures of imagination, Edmund, warmed by walking and emotion, approached the parſonage. The day, however, was one of thoſe raw and miſty ones which are ſo frequent in an Engliſh winter. When he rang at the gate, his great-coat and hat ſhook off a ſlight ſhower. "Come, "Cæſar, come;" cried he, haſtening the worthy negro, who, not obſerving the perſon that appeared at the rails of the gate, was proceeding ſlowly through the

the court. The ſound of Edmund's voice rouſed him from his lethargic pace, and he greeted the youth with a kind inquiry and a cordial air. "Where's the "family, my good fellow," ſaid Edmund, haſtening into the hall, where he ſtopped alarmed at what he ſaw. The place was filled with furniture packed up: he could not conceive the meaning of it; and moved on to the ſitting-room: alas! how unlike the picture he had drawn on the way. No fire was in the grate, the carpet was rolled up, the mirrors removed, the piano-forte caſed. "What "can this mean?" cried he to Cæſar, who had followed him: "where is Mr. "Aubrey? Where is Arthur? Are they "going away?" Before the negro could anſwer, two men came into the room to carry out ſome of the articles; and, as the door opened, Mrs. Miller's voice was heard calling Cæſar, who immediately

ately obeyed the ſummons, leaving Edmund in amazement. He could not bear it; he followed; and, as he reached the ſtaircaſe, he heard diſtinctly the voices of Arthur, Emily, and Arthurina call out, "Good heaven? Edmund?" He flew up; they ran to meet him; and, in a moment, he found himſelf encloſed in the embraces of all the three, Arthur exclaiming, "Edmund!" while his ſiſters poured a ſhower of tears upon his arms. "But tell me," cried he, "tell me what "is the matter; and why you are packing up." Unaccuſtomed to the proceſſes of the law, Edmund was not ſtruck with the idea of an execution, till Arthur, preſſing his hand, ſaid: "You are "come at a very melancholy moment, "my dear friend; you are come to ſee the "houſe ſtript of every thing in it: the "goods are lawfully taken for the payment of ſome of my father's debts."

—"Oh

—" Oh Heavens!" cried Edmund, ſuddenly comprehending the nature of the calamity, " is it poſſible any man can be " ſo hard-hearted? But it ſhall not be " done."—" It cannot be prevented;" ſaid Arthur. " It can; it ſhall;" ſaid Edmund, returning haſtily down ſtairs; as haſtily accompanied by his three young friends. They ſeemed to ſkim over the ſteps to the bottom, where they ſuddenly ſtopped by an impulſe of Emily's; who, fearful of Edmund's emotion betraying him into an impropriety, caught him by the arm, and ſaid: " Mr. Smyth, take " care; I beg you to take care: Papa, " Sir," continued ſhe, burſting again into tears, " Papa is upſtairs; ſpeak to *him*." —" Dear, dear Miſs Aubrey," cried he, awed by her manner, and tortured by her tears, " I will obey you; but let " me firſt ſay one word to theſe men." She no longer prevented him: he ſtepped

ped forward, but not out of ſight of his friends, and, in a low, mild tone requeſted the officer, who came up to him, not to proceed, as he had reaſon to think that the money, for which the things were taken, would be immediately paid into his hands. The officer, promiſing to wait till Edmund had ſpoken with Aubrey, he returned to his friends, and accompanied them up ſtairs.

The whole family, at the time Edmund rang, were ſitting together in Mrs. Aubrey's chamber, whither Arthur led him without ceremony; and where he found Aubrey, Mrs. Aubrey, Arthur-William, and Mrs. Miller. They gave him an affectionate, though a melancholy welcome; and he loſt no time in communicating the offer of the curacy of Melford. He then requeſted to ſpeak alone with Aubrey; which Mrs. Aubrey interpreted into a ſignal of ſome new

calamity. " Indeed it is not," cried Edmund. " If ſo, my dear friend," ſaid Aubrey, " ſpeak here, we have no ſe-" crets, Edmund." Afraid of mentioning the money he had in his pocket, with any degree of indelicacy, Edmund looked round with ſome embarraſſment, and then addreſſing Aubrey, ſaid: " The " fact is, my dear Mr. Aubrey, I am " uneaſy leſt you ſhould make my un-" cle unhappy by refuſing him a favour " on which he has ſet his heart."—" I " can refuſe your uncle nothing that he " will aſk," replied Aubrey, " but let " me firſt tell you that, if the requeſt be " to make the change immediately from " Mariton to Melford, compliance will " not be in my power."—" Nay, but in-" deed, Sir," replied Edmund, " it is in " your power."—" To baniſh all re-" ſerve," ſaid Aubrey, " know that I am " ſo involved in debt in this part of the

" country,

" country, that a removal will be impoſ-
" ſible, except ſuch a one as will give
" your uncle great pain."—" All this
" you may ſurmount, my dear Sir, if you
" will condeſcend to take a loan of a
" ſum my uncle can ſpare, and which I
" am come to offer you." Edmund ſaying this, caſt his eyes on Emily, and was rewarded with as ſweet a look of approbation as was ever beſtowed on man by beautiful eyes gliſtening with tears. Having got over this difficult pitch in the way of delicacy, he briefly, and with eaſe, acquainted Aubrey with Mr. Cowper's propoſal, and begged that he would not reject it. The Aubreys, charmed with the divine character of Mr. Cowper, were all of them loud in his praiſe; and Edmund, conſtruing their kind expreſſions into concurrence, intreated Aubrey to diſmiſs the men that were below.

Obligation to ſuch a man as Cowper could never be painful, and the alternative was too frightful to be endured: Aubrey therefore conſented to go down with his young friend, who, anxious that Mrs. Aubrey ſhould not be hurt in his preſence, by the confuſed appearance of the houſe, begged her to remain in her room with Miſs Aubrey and Arthurina till he returned for them. "May *I* come "for you? or is it *Arthur*'s place?" ſaid he. "God bleſs you!" replied Mrs. Aubrey, "it cannot but be grati- "fying to me that you ſhould conſider "any office of my ſon's as deſirable." He then went out of the room with Aubrey and Arthur, leaving Mrs. Aubrey and the girls admiring and bleſſing him. They made their way throuh the confuſion of the hall into the ſtudy, which had remained untouched. The buſineſs was ſoon ſettled; the amount of the executions

ecutions were for three hundred and fifty pounds: the officer produced an inventory of the property he had levied for that sum, which, on receiving the money from Edmund, he advised should be made over to him as a *bona fide* purchaser, that the articles might not again be liable to a levy. To this Edmund was a little averse; but, the reason being too evident, he consented, and took a receipt from the officer, who delivered the things to him, and promised to execute a formal deed of conveyance. "That "will do another time, my worthy "friend," said Edmund, "but at pre- "sent you will greatly oblige me by "making the men, with as much expe- "dition as possible, put every article in "its proper place: they shall be amply "compensated if they make haste. "Pray, Sir," continued he, addressing Aubrey, "do not go to the ladies till

"every thing is arranged." In a moment all was buſtle; the men, eager for their reward, were more expeditious in replacing than they had been in diſturbing the order of the houſe; Cæſar and Betty gave helping hands with ſmiling countenances; and Edmund and Arthur exerted themſelves together; while Aubrey locked himſelf up in his ſtudy, to adore his heavenly benefactor, and to humble himſelf for his want of ability and virtue to meet with rectitude the diſpenſations of his providence.

By the united energy, produced by the view of remuneration, and by the ſuperior excitement of love and greatneſs of mind, the parſonage, in leſs than an hour, wore its uſual appearance; and a blazing fire gave additional chearfulneſs to that room where Edmund's fancy had painted his harmonizing angel unconſciouſly enchanting her own loved group. No

ſooner

ſooner were the men diſcharged than he flew up to Mrs. Aubrey's chamber, ſaying, as he entered, "I have taken Arthur's "place, and am come for my mother." Mrs. Aubrey preſſed him to her boſom, kiſſed him with the warmth of a mother, and called him her ſon. The kiſſes of his own mother had never been ſweeter to him, beſtowed as Mrs. Aubrey's was in the preſence of his Emily, and accompanied with a title for which he longed, and for which he was come to ſue. He handed her down ſtairs, followed by the girls; and felt a greater pleaſure than he had ever experienced in his life, when he placed her in her chair by the fire ſide. On the countenance of Aubrey there ſtill hung a gloom which Edmund and Arthur ſtrove to diſſipate by talking of Mr. Cowper and Melford, of a ſpeedy ſettlement in that delightful ſpot, and of effects to be hoped from fru-

gality and agriculture. Aubrey was not inſenſible to their amiable efforts, ſtrove to be chearful, and was at length ſucceſsful. But his chearfulneſs was not that of oblivion; he reflected more than ever on his ſituation, and he foreſaw ſimilar recurrences of the terrible dilemma from which he had been relieved by friendſhip—a friendſhip which could not be again exerted, and if it could, ought not to be permitted. The time was approaching too when it would be incumbent upon him to ſurrender his perſon in diſcharge of his bail; and he had, ſoon after his arreſt, written to Dr. Bowes to inform him that it would probably be out of his power to continue his curate. He pondered on his wayward fate, and reproached the memory of his uncle; but could ſee no proſpect of ſurmounting his difficulties, till at length he thought of calling his creditors together,

laying

laying his ſituation before them, and requeſting their direction. He communicated this idea to Arthur and Edmund, and the latter begged he would allow him to write previouſly on the ſubject to his uncle, to which Aubrey aſſented, and likewiſe wrote himſelf.

The letters diſpatched, the two lads had time to talk upon the themes in which their hearts were ſo warmly intereſted. As ſoon as they were alone in the next morning's ramble, Edmund delivered his uncle's meſſage to Arthur, ſaying at the ſame time, that he wiſhed, with all his heart, that it was not neceſſary for him to go abroad; for that he was certain, that Harriet was ſenſible of his attachment, and waited only a fair opportunity to convince him of it:—"But what is to be done," my dear friend, continued he, "as matters ſtand "at preſent?"—"My dear Edmund,"

replied Arthur, " your uncle is right; I " felt the juſtneſs of his ſentiment before " you brought me his kind meſſage; and " even while under the ſame roof with " your ſiſter; while ſhe was here, I deter- " mined not to involve her in the ad- " verſe fate to which I am doomed. I " love, and ſhall love her as long as I " breathe; but I have baniſhed all " thoughts of marrying. No, Edmund, " it muſt not be; while my family are in " diſtreſs, I ſhall endeavour to bend all my " efforts to extricate them, and devote " my life to their comfort. What I have " ſuffered lately, from the events that " have taken place at the Parſonage, has " opened my eyes to life, and convinced " me, that we are not born to wiſh " and to enjoy, but to ſtruggle and be " patient. I am well diſpoſed to ſtrug- " gle, but I am afraid I ſhall have no " footing to bear me up in the forlorn

" ſtate

" ſtate of our affairs: it is not in my fa-
" ther's power even to enable me to go
" abroad."—" I was afraid of it," ſaid
Edmund, " and my uncle told me he
" thought ſo; but as your plan is the
" only hope you have of recovering a
" ſtate of competence, it muſt be ef-
" fected. I have written to my uncle
" for as much money as he can ſpare,
" and I hope it will be enough, not only
" to ſatisfy your father's creditors for the
" preſent, but to ſet you off."—" Ed-
" mund!" ſaid Arthur, " words cannot
" expreſs to you the opinion I have of
" your virtue, nor the purity of my
" friendſhip; but I know you will think
" I give you the beſt proof of both, in
" aſſuring you, that I warmly wiſh your
" hope may be realized." Then turn-
ing the converſation—" Will not the
" reſidence of our family at Melford,"
ſaid he, " be a ſource of miſery to you,

" Edmund? To behold daily the object " of love, while one is doomed to relin- " quish hope, must be of all states the " most miserable! Your fate, my friend, " will be worse than mine." Edmund's countenance brightened. " O! Arthur," cried he, " I have such joyful news to tell you!" He then proceeded, in the most animated manner, to disclose his uncle's approbation, the state of his affairs, and the hope he had of a comfortable provision for Emily, if he could obtain her hand. " Mr. Cowper," said Arthur, " has one of the noblest minds " inhabiting the human frame. I knew " you would be my brother. I rejoice " in your prospect of bliss; but to effect " it, I fear you will find requires more " management than ever; not with my " father and mother, but with Emily " herself. Her consent, at present, will " have the appearance of deserting the

" family

" family in the hour of diſtreſs; added
" to which, it may ſeem to be her in-
" tereſt as well as her choice."—" Oh!
" but the greatneſs of her ſoul!" cried
Edmund. —" Is," continued Arthur,
" what I am moſt afraid of; but I think
" I have an argument that will ſatisfy
" her. She has refuſed, not only Colonel
" Spicer, but our worthy friend Rowley,
" both men of fortune; this will remove
" the latter objection; but I doubt her
" being prevailed upon to leave my fa-
" ther and mother at preſent."—" Oh!
" let her conſent to be mine," ſaid Ed-
mund, " and we ſhall all be as one
" family."—" Happy, happy Edmund!"
cried Arthur, " nurſed in misfortune,
" reared by induſtry, your guardian
" angel has been watchful over you, and
" prepared for you an enviable lot;
" while mine, from proſperity and the
" faireſt proſpects, ſuffers me to ſink

" within the view of bliſs, and permits " the moſt flattering years of life to be " ſpent in abſence from thoſe who poſ- " ſeſs my heart!" The contraſt was ſtriking, the lively manner in which it was made, touched Edmund to the ſoul. " Oh, Arthur!" ſaid he, " would to God " it were in the nature of things that I " could take your place! but of this be " aſſured, that my happineſs cannot be " complete till you return, even if Emily " conſent to be mine." After a ſhort pauſe, Arthur ſaid, with a ſigh, " I will " think of you, and ſtrive to deſerve my " ſhare, whether it be my fate or not." They now walked in ſilence towards the village, but before they reached it, rouſed from their reverie, they agreed to exert themſelves to enliven the Parſonage.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XLIX.

Edmund's bold Addreſs. Letters from Melford. A Meeting of Creditors. Arrival of a Stranger. Reſult of the Meeting of Creditors. Aubrey arreſted. Time of Removal from Mariton determined.

EDMUND, encouraged by his uncle's approbation and plans, was reſolved to loſe no time in putting an end to every doubt reſpecting the fate of his attachment; but his heart told him that before he applied to Aubrey, he ſhould have Emily's permiſſion to do it. He did not eaſily find an opportunity to ſpeak with her by herſelf; and he was at laſt obliged to aſk Arthur's aſſiſtance, who, next morning, when Aubrey was employed in

in the ſtudy writing letters to his creditors, and Mrs. Aubrey was engaged in ſome domeſtic concerns, effected his wiſh by drawing away Arthurina and Arthur William.

When Emily found herſelf alone with Edmund, ſhe felt a flutter for which ſhe could not account; but he was no longer the baſhful, paſſive, timid lover that he was when he conſidered that he had no pretenſion to hope. "Allow me, Miſs "Aubrey," ſaid he, "to take this fa- "vourable moment to entreat your ap- "probation of a paſſion you have in- "ſpired. Oh! ſuffer me to take your "hand, and to ſwear upon it the pureſt, "tendereſt, warmeſt vows, which you "have taught my heart to conceive. I "ſwear then," continued he, eagerly imprinting a kiſs upon it; "I ſwear——" Emily had ſuffered him to take her hand, but no ſooner felt his kiſs upon it than ſhe

ſhe recollected herſelf, and withdrawing it, ſaid: "Edmund, I am not inſenſible "of your worth; you deſerve much "more happineſs than it is in my power "to beſtow; but this is not a time, nor "are we either of us in a ſituation to talk "of love."—"I will convince, you, "Emily," cried he, "if you will but "hear me, that this *is* the fitteſt time, "and that I *am* in a ſituation, to talk of "love."—"I am glad," ſaid ſhe, "to "hear of your proſperity; but he at whoſe "diſpoſal I am is not proſperous; and "at all events I will hear of no love that "he has not adviſed, nor of any that he "does, if he is to be wounded by it."—"I conſent, Emily," replied he, "to "leave my fate in his hands; I aſk but "your permiſſion to ſpeak to him: I "have already obtained my uncle's, if "you will conſent to it."—"Edmund," ſaid ſhe, "I will treat you with the can-

"dour

" dour you deſerve. I feel for you a " more than common affection; and to " know that you think me worthy of " yours is truly grateful to my heart; " but the thought of any alteration of " life at preſent cannot enter my mind. " You may tell what has now paſſed be- " tween us to my father and mother, for " I ſhall do it. Hereafter, if things take " a happier turn, and they adviſe it, I " will liſten to you: meanwhile deſiſt " from attempting to picture to yourſelf " or to me a happineſs the enjoyment of " which would be a reproach to our " minds at this bitter juncture."—" I am " ſatisfied, my Emily," cried Edmund, " with the delicious hope you have given " me: yes, yes, things will take a happy " turn at Melford." Saying which, he again took her hand and kiſſed it, nor did ſhe refuſe it. She held in it a handkerchief, which ſhe left in his hand without

without uttering a word. He looked at it with rapture, and placed it in his boſom. She ſmiled, and ſaid, ſhe hoped it would never again prove ſo dangerous as it once had. Still more delighted to find it the handkerchief which had been the cauſe of his fall into the river, he kiſſed it again and again, and vowed he would prize it as long as he lived.

Emily then entered into ſome converſation with him reſpecting the removal of her family to Melford; and Mrs. Aubrey joining them, entered into the topics it preſented with great intereſt. It was renewed when all the family were aſſembled; they were delighted to dwell upon it; and Aubrey only waited for leters from Mr. Cowper to take the preliminary ſteps. Theſe were not long delayed: Aubrey and Edmund both received anſwers by the return of the poſt.

To

To the former, Mr. Cowper, in the moſt friendly terms, expreſſed his pleaſure at the determination which it had occurred to him to make; and to the latter he ſaid, that as much of the remaining five hundred pounds of Dr. Searle's donation as was neceſſary to complete Aubrey's views, and effect his removal, was at his command; that the whole, within two days, ſhould be placed in the hands of his banker at Glouceſter in Edmund's name, who might draw to the full extent of it. It is not difficult to conceive the impreſſion made by theſe letters at the Parſonage: a new zeſt was given to the eſteem and affection inſpired by Cowper, and admiration was accompanied by prayers for his happineſs. Edmund's delight was ineffable; and he urged Aubrey to aſſemble his creditors as ſoon as poſſible, convinced that the offer his friend was enabled to make

make would satisfy them, and procure ample time for a final settlement.

A full meeting was not easily obtained, for some of the creditors were not in the neighbourhood; and Edmund had spent, not unhappily, the whole month of February at the Parsonage before it was effected, though the most pressing letters had been written on the occasion. At length a meeting was held at an inn at Loughborough, where Aubrey, accompanied only by Edmund, appeared and plainly stated his case. "Gentlemen," said he, "my situation must be a most painful "one to a man acquainted with the na- "ture of society, and sensible of the un- "alterable rules of justice. No name too "harsh can be given to one capable of "coolly meditating a breach of those "rules; but, on the other hand, some "lenity is perhaps due to him who is un- "warily led, step by step, to contract debts

"till

" till he finds himself unable to pay them."
—" Humph!" grunted a lusty grocer, whose knit brow brow bespoke a dissatisfied mind; " no man should contract a " debt, unless he is clear he can pay it."
—" It would not be very easy, Sir," said Aubrey, roused, but not disconcerted by this remark, " to settle a definition of " the word *clear* in the sense you use it, " for such *clearness* may require a pro- " portionate sum to be constantly in " hand: but if expectation be a sufficient " clearness, your observation cannot ap- " ply to me. I never contracted a debt " without a prospect of paying it; and " though I am unfortunate at present, I " still hope that it will finally be in my " power to discharge every shilling I " owe."—" Humph!" said the grocer, " I have no notion of a man bringing up " a family to sing, pipe, and fiddle away " with my money; nor to give Sunday

" dinners

" dinners to poor people at my coſt."—
" Misfortune," ſaid Aubrey, " naturally
" lays a load on the mind, which it is the
" part of wiſdom to lighten as much as
" poſſible, if crime make no part of the
" burden. A man, Sir, muſt be a monſter
" to break the ſpirit of his children, who
" are involved in his fate: if muſic will
" alleviate their calamity, he would be a
" wretch did he not promote it. As to
" little ſervices rendered to the needy,
" they ſhould be conſidered as priority
" debts: charity is a debt due to the
" Almighty, and I hope you will allow
" that *his* debts ought to be firſt paid."
—" Humph!" cried the diſputant,
" juſtice in our dealings is alſo a debt
" due to God."—" True," rejoined
Aubrey, " but what creditor's demand
" is ſo urgent as that of the hungry and
" naked? The rich can better wait."
—" Humph!" replied the man, " it is

" in

" in a manner dispensing the property " of another: have you a right to do " that?"—" Would to God I had the " power!" cried Aubrey, " I would " not debate the right: there is not a " wealthy man throughout the kingdom " into whose purse I would not plunge " my hand, and while I left him luxury, " I would dispense comfort to all. The " rich should not forget that they are the " appointed stewards of the poor."— " Humph! mayhap a creditor of your's " may be poor."—" That," said Aubrey, " I deny; and if he were, Justice and " Charity would go hand in hand, and I " would divide my last shilling with him. " But I trust," continued he, " that we " are not met to debate upon my errors; " I hope I see friends, not adversaries " round me; for I have called you toge- " ther to state my situation, ask your ad- " vice, and follow your directions." He

then

then ſtated at large the extraordinary, unforeſeen loſs of his family eſtates, the diſappointment of his expectation of preferment, and his efforts to reform every ſuperfluous expence, concluding with his wiſh to remove from Mariton, and his inability to offer more than a few hundreds among them; three hundred or three hundred and fifty at fartheſt, which was not equal to a fourth of their demands. When Aubrey ceaſed ſpeaking a partial murmur was heard among the creditors; but ſome ſeemed favourable, and a miller at the bottom of the table addreſſing him, ſaid: "Mr. Aubrey, I "firmly believe that were it in your "power, you would not only pay your "debts, but take delight to aſſiſt any "man here; I therefore, for my part, "declare that I am perfectly ſatisfied, "and if the reſt of the creditors will "agree, I ſhall be happy to wait till you

" are able, without taking away from " you the little money that remains in " your hands: nay, I am willing to ſign " a receipt, and truſt to you entirely, if it " is ever in your power." A diſpute here aroſe among the creditors, who differed widely in their opinions, and proceeded to a very warm reprobation of the ſentiments of one another.

In the midſt of the debate Cæſar entered the room, and delivered a letter to his maſter from Mrs. Aubrey, containing theſe few lines: " A moſt ex- " traordinary occurrence, my deareſt " Aubrey, is the occaſion of my ſending " for you. I will not loſe time by en- " tering into an explanation; but, leſt " you ſhould be uneaſy, I will juſt ſay " that this ſingular event is of the moſt " fortunate nature, and conſidered by " me as the interpoſition of Providence. " If poſſible, leave the buſineſs you are

" about,

"about, and come home for an hour: "you may return." On reading this note, Aubrey asked his creditors if he should leave them to consider of what he had said; and, upon their consenting, he told them that the letter he had just received mentioned a circumstance which rendered it necessary for him to go home, but that he should not be long gone. He then left them, and set out immediately with Edmund for Mariton. From Cæsar he learned that a stranger with a superb equipage had arrived at the Parsonage, but of what nature his visit was Cæsar knew nothing. This, however, was soon explained by the gentleman himself, whom he found listening to a duet sung by Mrs. Aubrey and Emily. Mrs. Aubrey immediately introduced them to each other; and Aubrey learned that he had under his roof the young, benevolent, accomplished, handsome, and

rich Mr. Hamline, of whose wealth and noble spirit he had often heard. He took Aubrey by the hand, and with the prepossessing address of virtue, beauty, and accomplishment united, repeated the business he had already opened to Mrs. Aubrey. "I am come, my dear Sir, to make you "a proposal, which I hope will meet "your concurrence, as I think it will be "mutually advantageous to us. You "have never, I find, been told of Mrs. "Aubrey's title to an estate in the island "of St. Kitt's."—"Title!" cried Aubrey, astonished. "Yes," replied Mr. Hamline, "as clear as mine to my "estates." He then proceeded to inform Aubrey that the estate alluded to, called Montpelier, belonged to Mr. Melvil, who had put it in trust to pay off its debts, and that at his death it was supposed to be much involved; but that having for many years made good crops,

he

he had no doubt of its being nearly, if not entirely clear of debts: that the truſtee, who was a man of no principle, appropriated the returns to himſelf, and had no fear of ever being called to account, the heireſs having been ſo long unheard of. Mr. Hamline then ſaid that he ſhould be glad to buy the title; and that as he had the command of money, he would bring the truſtee to an account. "I will make you a fair offer, Mr. Au-"brey," continued he: "I know not "what the full value may be, or how the "accounts ſtand, and I muſt be at a con-"ſiderable expence; therefore I propoſe "to give you five thouſand pounds for "the title; if it prove worth more I "ſhall not be backward in a further ad-"vance." This was indeed a moſt unexpected event; nor did Aubrey want much perſuaſion to cloſe with the offer: he was ſufficiently acquainted with the

character of Mr. Hamline to know that he would make no propoſal that was not only juſt but generous. The bargain was concluded to the general joy of the whole family; and it was agreed that the conveyance ſhould be made as ſoon as poſſible, with all the due formalities of law. Aubrey then inquired by what means Mr. Hamline had diſcovered the title to be in Mrs. Aubrey. "By the mereſt acci-"dent," ſaid Mr. Hamline, "which "aroſe from the delay of your ſon's "going to St. Kitt's; for it was to "me that Mr. Cowper applied be-"fore Chriſtmas in his favour I again "received a letter from him laſt week, "accounting for the delay in an ami-"able, friendly manner; and men-"tioning, in order to intereſt me the "more for Mr. Aubrey, his mother "being the daughter of a Weſt Indian "of St. Kitt's, of the name of "Melvil; ſo that I learned by

"the

"the moſt unlooked for hazard what I "had been above a year endeavouring "to diſcover. Hearing how welcome "the tidings might be to you, I deter- "mined to come down to Mariton; and "I ſhall be very happy to prove myſelf "a friend to the family. The ſpring "ſhips will be ſailing in about ſix weeks, "and if Mr. Aubrey goes out I have no "doubt of being able to be of ſervice "to him." Arthur aſſured him he ſhould be proud of a patron of ſuch a character; and Aubrey invited him to paſs a few days at the Parſonage. To this he conſented; and, being made acquainted with the buſineſs at Loughborough, propoſed to take Aubrey over in his carriage, and ſettle it at once. The offer was accepted. On the road Aubrey gave an account of the characters he had to deal with, and it was determined to know what the reſolution

of the creditors was before he proceeded to ſettle with them.

When he met them, the majority had ſour faces. One ſaid, "Lookee, Mr. "Aubrey, I cannot do without my mo-"ney, and ſo I am determined to have "it."—"I'll have all or none," ſaid another. "So will I."—"And I," ſaid a third, and fourth. On the other hand, ſeveral aſſured him that they would never trouble him: and among theſe, to his great ſurpriſe, was his firſt oppo-nent, who ſpoke to him with a civility and kindneſs that won his heart. "I "meant nothing by my bluntneſs," ſaid he, "but to try you; pray think no "more of what you owe me; I never "ſhall."—"However blunt the language "of a man," ſaid Aubrey, "the heart "that dictates ſuch generoſity cannot "but be noble: but I rejoice more than "I can tell you, in having it in my power

"power to convince you that it is not "shown to one capable of abusing it. "Have the goodness to write a receipt "for the full amount of what I owe you, "and I will immediately pay it." The generous grocer instantly produced his pocket-book, noted the sum, and began to write, while others of the creditors murmured, and said it was unfair to pay one in preference to the rest. Aubrey then addressed the miller at the bottom of the table, requesting that he would also write a receipt. The honest miller was with difficulty prevailed upon to do it; for, though sixty pounds was money, thank God he did not want it, and it was pulling a man to pieces to take his all from him. Aubrey made the same request of the other creditors, who had discovered some milk of human kindness. He then applied to Mr. Hamline who gave separate drafts to the creditors,

according to their reſpective demands. Upon being paid, the grocer ſeemed anxious to be gone; but Aubrey detained him to witneſs the concluſion of the meeting; and thus addreſſed the creditors who remained unpaid: "In "ſpite of the candid repreſentation I "made of the dreadful ſtate of my "affairs, which evidently was not the "effect of diſhoneſt deſigns; in ſpite of "the humane example ſet by theſe gen-"tlemen, who have doubled my ob-"ligation to them, it is clearly your "intention to puſh me to the utmoſt "diſtreſs, to the horrors of deſtitution, "to want, and a priſon. Are ye men? "creatures of the ſame ſpecies with "theſe? Will my ſufferings, the ſuf-"ferings of my innocent family put one "ſhilling into your pocket? or is it the "wicked gratification of revenge that "ye ſeek? I call upon you, in the name

" of your Creator, in that of your Savi-
" our, to reflect, to examine your hearts,
" and not to suffer them to be corroded
" by that selfishness and avarice by
" which so many souls are lost. If I
" can but awaken you to a sense of
" humanity, you will be in debt to me
" infinitely more than I now am to you;
" and I hope my present conduct will
" have some effect. I have, though un-
" designedly, encroached on your pro-
" perty, and wonder not that you are
" angry: but you might have been angry
" with consideration; and be assured
" that no earthly law would be sufficient
" to acquit you of the consequences of
" inhumanity. The law that gives you
" a right to tear me from my family, and
" to cast me into a dungeon to become
" the victim of despair, can only be jus-
" tified by the want of other means to
" ensure the fidelity of contracts; and

 " immor-

" immortalized will he be who ſhall be " the inſtrument of providing an ade- " quate ſubſtitute for ſo baneful, ſo arbi- " trary a power as is now lodged in the " hands of individuals; a ſubſtitute which, " while it enforces juſtice, ſhall diſappoint " the mercileſs. An hour ago I was more " willing than able to pay you; at pre- " ſent I am more able than willing. " Would to God! I could fund what I " owe you, for the certain maintenance " of ſome poor families; and, though I " did not pay you a ſhilling, my con- " ſcience would acquit me: but I know " the law, and I ſubmit to it, content with " the difference I have made in the mode " of paying men ſo different in their na- " ture." He then diſcharged the remaining debts, and took receipts. Mr. Hamline was highly gratified with the manner in which Aubrey had ſettled the buſineſs; and they returned to Mariton, the one glowing

glowing with delight at the opportune visit he had made, the other with a heart relieved of a heavy burden. On the way Aubrey descanted with pleasure on the conduct of his favourable creditors, and particularly on the virtue of the blunt grocer: but, when the carriage stopped at the Parsonage gate, he was extremely surprised, on getting out, to find himself once more arrested. The arrest, however, soon became a subject of mirth, when it was known that it was at the suit of the virtuous grocer, who, not expecting the result of the meeting, had prepared to have Aubrey taken at the door of his house, at the very time he assured him that he would never trouble him. Crichton, the officer, advised an action for a false arrest; but Aubrey contented himself with a laugh, and the ejaculation of "precious hypocrite!" The Aubreys now began to think themselves again

again the favourites of Heaven. Mr. Hamline ſtaid near a week with them, during which the articles of agreement for Montpelier, the Melvil eſtate, was executed between him and Aubrey; and the former offered the latter any part of the purchaſe-money, though it was neceſſary to wait ſome time for the perfecting of the conveyance, which could not be made without the ſeparate examination of Mrs. Aubrey. Aubrey took enough for immediate expences, and his removal to Melford; and Mr. Hamline left the Parſonage, after inviting Arthur to make his houſe in town his home previous to his ſailing. An account of theſe events were immediately tranſmitted to Mr. Cowper, who, on conſideration of Arthur's approaching departure, conſented to Edmund's remaining to the laſt with his friend: and Aubrey being reſolved on leaving Mari-

ton

ton as soon as possible, again wrote to Dr. Bowes, to urge him to provide for the service of the church by the beginning of the month of April.

CHAP-

CHAPTER L.

Being the longeſt, as well as the laſt, the Contents of which, it would be impolicy to prefix.

THE unexpected event which enabled Aubrey to diſcharge all his debts, and to conſider himſelf maſter of a ſurplus of near three thouſand pounds, reſtored that equanimity of ſpirits, and that large balance of happineſs with which the Aubreys ſeemed to be favoured by Nature. The time between Mr. Hemline's departure, and the period for their removal to Melford, was ſpent with that double reliſh, which is uſually the effect of contraſted feelings; but that their enjoyment might not be more than human, it was occaſionally and frequently mingled with the painful

painful reflection, that Arthur was soon to be separated from them. Poor Arthur, who felt himself doomed by fate to be torn from those he held most dear, still had room in his heart for sympathy, in the happiness he saw restored, and for delight at the good fortune of his friend Edmund, who, obtaining the consent of Aubrey, and Mrs. Aubrey, to woo his Emily, had been blessed with her approbation as a lover: for Aubrey, on consulting with Mrs. Aubrey, and at her request, had declared his intention to give each of his daughters seven hundred pounds at her wedding, to devote five to the equipment and advancement of Arthur, and to keep the rest of his fortune, amounting to about a thousand pounds, to help the stipend of the curacy, or to be turned to advantage for advancing Arthur-William, and for forming a fund for Mrs. Aubrey, in case of his own death.

death. The family were going to a place, where, with the fruit of their experience, they might practiſe all the frugality neceſſary to independence; the rational diſtribution of the little fortune which had ſo providentially ſprung from the Melvil eſtate, had huſhed pride into felicity; and the ſettlement of the girls, under the protection of worthy men, was contemplated by Aubrey and Mrs. Aubrey, with the higheſt ſatisfaction.

The time for quitting Mariton approaching, every arrangement for the purpoſe was made, the bills were paid, the articles neceſſary to precede the family packed up, and ſent off, and the Aubreys took a formal leave of the inhabitants, little grieved to leave any of them, except the Cambridges; for Mr. Rowley was ſtill abroad. A few days before their departure, the new curate of Mariton came to take poſſeſſion, and purchaſed

purchased the principal part of the furniture which suited the Parsonage. It was unanimously agreed, that Arthur should accompany the family to Melford, where Aubrey and Mrs. Aubrey would leave the girls and Arthur-William, and proceed to London with Arthur, to fix his voyage, and to complete the conveyance of the Melvil estate. Just as Aubrey had named the day for the commencement of their journey, Cæsar came in with two letters, one from the post to Aubrey, and one brought by an express, directed to Arthur. Great was the surprise of the party, when Arthur read his aloud as follows:—

"Lord Sudley earnestly desires to see "Mr. Arthur Aubrey, without a mo- "ment's delay: his Lordship's physi- "cians have declared that he cannot re- "cover, and it is his intention, for more "reasons than one, but particularly on

"account

" account of the brave manner in which
" Mr. Aubrey ſaved his life, in the
" grounds of Sudley Caſtle, to leave him
" the whole of his diſpoſable fortune.
" This note is dictated by Lord Sudley,
" to his apothecary, who, at his Lord-
" ſhip's deſire, is to forward it imme-
" diately by an expreſs. Lord Sudley,
" anxious to ſee Mr. Aubrey before he
" dies, urges his immediate compliance.

" Sudley Caſtle,
" April 6th."

It was clear, from this note, that Edmund's deſign in leaving Lord Sudley, to learn his name at his ſteward's houſe, had ſucceeded, and that his Lordſhip had heard of Arthur, and not of him: but the effect it had produced, had never entered his head, and he now wiſhed that Arthur, inſtead of himſelf, had been his deliverer. On reflection, however, neither

ther he nor his friends thought that advantage could be taken of the preſent diſpoſition of the Peer, at leaſt to the extent ſuggeſted in the note; for a legal deprivation of property was, in ſuch caſes, no leſs a moral robbery. At all events, Arthur was the laſt perſon in the world, who could ſtand forward to reap the advantage; and it was reſolved that Lord Sudley ſhould be informed of his miſtake: but whether perſonally, or by letter, was left to be decided next day at Leiceſter, where, by appointment in the letter received by Aubrey, which was from Melford, the Aubreys were to meet Mr. Cowper and the Smyths, whoſe journey Mr. Cowper's letter will ſhow to be neither inconſiderate nor needleſs. It was as follows:—

"My dear Aubrey, As you are all "ready to ſtart, will you ſet out on re- "ceiving this, and meet me, with my "ſiſter

"ſiſter and Harriet, at Leiceſter, on the "10th? This is no compliment to you, "but our journey is in conſequence of "an invitation I have received from "Mr. Bowater, to meet Smyth at his "houſe. I take his wife and daughter "with me to the inn, where he was ſeen "by the former, as it may lead to ſome-"thing. As I hope to find you all "there, I will only add our beſt re-"gards, &c."

This intelligence immediately determined Aubrey to ſet out next morning, and Cæſar was diſpatched to beſpeak carriages. Edmund was at firſt conſiderably agitated, but virtue ſoon allayed the tumult of feeling. He ſaid, that he had no ambition to be owned by ſuch a father; and as for fortune, though he ſhould delight in throwing it at the feet of his Emily, it might be purchaſed too dearly. The Cambridges ſpent the laſt

day

day with the Aubreys, and again came the next morning early to see them off. Betty, whose conduct had done her so much credit, was, at her own request, included in the removal, but staid to spend a week with her friends, as well as to take charge of some things that were left behind, to be sent by the carrier. The family, after taking an affectionate leave of the worthy amiable Cambridges, set out, Aubrey and Mrs. Aubrey with Arthurina, Arthur-William and Mrs. Miller in the old coach; Emily with her brother, and Edmund, in a post-chaise, and Cæsar bringing up the rear on horseback. They were at Leicester some hours before their friends from Melford, who arrived at the inn about one o'clock. After an affectionate meeting, and cordial congratulations, Lord Sudley's letter was communicated to Mr. Cowper, and it was determined that Edmund should

ſhould go in perſon to wait upon him, and inform him of his miſtake, without loſs of time. "To match your "tidings of Lord Sudley," ſaid Mr. Cowper, "I have extraordinary news "to tell you. Have you ſeen the ac- "count in the newſpapers of the arreſt "of a Colonel Thornville, who is to be "tried for forgery and bigamy?"— "Oh, yes!" replied Aubrey, "and "grieved to think the army ſo diſ- "graced."—"Then grieve no more "for the army," cried Mr. Cowper, "but lament the fate, and the more be- "cauſe merited, of our friend Jack El- "ton."—"Elton!" exclaimed Aubrey, with more horror than ſurpriſe, "Good "Heaven! Elton!"—"Even ſo," ſaid Mr. Cowper, taking a letter from his pocket, and giving it to Aubrey, "he "was taken up at Gloceſter, and will be "brought to trial for the forgery at the "enſuing

" enſuing aſſizes, which commence next " week. The evidence againſt him is " complete, and there is no doubt he " will pay the forfeit of his crime." The letter was addreſſed to Mr. Cowper at Melford, and was as follows:—

" Dear, worthy Mr. Cowper, I know " the influence of your character to be ſo " great, and your heart to be ſo inclined " towards the unfortunate, that I call " upon you to ſave me, if poſſible, from " a wretched, ignominious fate. I will " uſe no diſingenuous artifice with you. " I have ſpent my life badly, but I ſee " the folly of the courſe I have taken, " and if my life is ſpared me, I will atone " for all my miſdeeds. Oh! that I had " followed the wiſe advice you gave me " early in my outſet! but my heart fixed " itſelf on falſe pleaſures, and they have " brought me to this. Try, pray try to " ſave me, and you ſhall witneſs the re-

"form your interpoſition will make. I "am to be tried for a forgery, com- "mitted in the name of Colonel Thorn- "ville; but I am told by my lawyer, "that I may contrive not to be iden- "tified. I know not how he means to "manage it; but he ſays, if any man of "known character will appear in my "favour, he will be anſwerable to get "me off. Think, my dear ſir, that by "ſaving my life now, you will be the "means of the final ſalvation of a ſoul; "and do not refuſe your aſſiſtance. At "all events, in the name of all that is "dear to you on earth, or in heaven, "do not refuſe me the conſolation of "ſeeing you."

"I made it a point," ſaid Mr. Cowper, when Aubrey had finiſhed the letter, "to ſee him in my way through "Gloceſter; but I found, both by his "own account, and by the reſult of en-

"quiry

" quiry elſewhere, that the evidence,
" both as to his perſon and the fact, was
" poſitive and inconteſtable; and I far-
" ther convinced him, that, if it were not
" ſo, my appearance would be injurious
" to him: for I could not poſſibly, in
" ſpeaking of character, omit the bad,
" more than the good parts of it. I
" ſaid all I could to leſſen the horror of
" his fate, without decreaſing a ſenſe of
" the awful ſcene that awaits him; and
" I adviſed him not to rely on the
" lawyer, but on that Judge, who, by
" being privy to the heart, can deter-
" mine juſtice in mercy. He ſhed tears,
" and I ſhook hands with him on part-
" ing."—" Dreadful!" ſaid Mrs. Au-
brey, " that a man of ſuch ability, ad-
" dreſs, and good qualities, ſhould come
" to an end like this!"—" Yes, my
" dear madam," ſaid Mr. Cowper, " it
" is dreadful, but nothing is more na-

" tural: uncontrolled indulgence leads
" to guilt, and guilt to deſtruction.
" Self-command is the only barrier
" againſt the torrent of the paſſions;
" and he, whom neither religion nor
" common ſenſe can inſpire with ſuffi-
" cient force to raiſe it, muſt ſooner or
" later be ſwept away."—" I never be-
" fore heard," ſaid Aubrey, " that he
" was a married man."—" Nor I," ſaid
" Cowper, " till in his contrition he ac-
" knowledged that he had a wife in the
" South of England, to whom he had
" hitherto ſent a regular ſupply of mo-
" ney, on condition of her not moleſting
" him. The woman whom he has
" lately deceived and married, is in an
" humble ſituation of life, but beautiful
" and innocent: he deſerves to ſuffer, if it
" were only for this; but however juſtice
" may guide us to doom any being to
" ſuffer, a heart that has feeling cannot
" but

" but relent, in some degree, when the " suffering takes place. Poor wretch! " he must endure and pass away, and we " must pity and forget him."

As Mr. Cowper said this, to the surprise of his friends, he darted out of the room, leaving the door open, and in less than a minute returned, pulling in a stranger by the sleeve. " Yes, sir," said Cowper to him, " I am happy I saw " you before you passed the window; the " sooner this eclaircissement takes-place " the better; meanwhile, give me leave " to introduce you to Mrs. Smyth." He pointed to his sister, informing her at the same time, that the person introduced was Mr. Smyth's doctor, at Oakham. " Upon my word, madam," said the doctor, " I shall be very happy to pre- " sent to you Mr. Smyth, with whom I " certainly have the honour of being ac- " quainted; but I must beg leave to say,

" that I think this gentleman is under " a miſtake. I am convinced you do " not know Mr. Smyth."—" Sir," ſaid Mr. Cowper's ſiſter, " it is entirely " at my brother's deſire that I conſent to " be near where Mr. Smyth is, and I " hope I may never ſee him; yet if it " ſhould be neceſſary, I certainly will " confront him."—" Mr. Smyth is " much obliged to you, madam," replied the doctor, " but what proof have you " of his being your Mr. Smyth? there " are many of the name."—" The beſt " proof, ſir," rejoined Mrs. Smyth; " that of my own eyes: I ſaw him in this " very room, not a minute before he " drove off in the poſt-chaiſe for Oke- " ham."—" Why! my dear madam," ſaid he, raiſing his hands and eyes, " this is " proof poſitive, with a vengeance. Mr. " Smyth was walking with Mr. Bowater, " not two minutes before I had the ho-

" nour

"nour of being led in here by your "brother. Bowater is ordering ſome "oranges for his deſert to-day; and if "you look out at the window you may "ſee him paſs." Scarcely were the words out of his mouth, when Mr. Bowater appeared in ſight, and Mr. Cowper tapping at the window, received a nod from him, indicating his intention to come in. Having but to turn in at the gateway, he was preſently in the parlour, amidſt the company, to whom Mr. Cowper announced him by name, and ſeparately introduced them to him. After paying his reſpects: "But Mr. "Cowper," ſaid he, looking at the doctor, "it was not fair to foreſtal me: "I meant to have had the pleaſure of "the eclairciſſement at my houſe; how-"ever, I am glad you are no longer in "ſuſpenſe."—"I never was in ſuſpenſe," ſaid Mr. Cowper, "but I confeſs that

" my conduct depends entirely upon " his, and he will find our proofs " ſtronger than his aſſurance."—" Is it " poſſible?" cried Mr. Bowater; " can " I believe my ears? He muſt indeed " poſſeſs matchleſs aſſurance, if he deny " the truth before you both; and when " I look round, I think he muſt be to- " tally void of feeling, if he can perſiſt." Then turning to the doctor; " For God's " ſake," continued he, ſeriouſly and with great warmth, " I entreat you to ex- " plain, my dear Smyth." Here the gentleman burſt into a loud laugh, and going up to Mr. Cowper, ſaid, " Pray " forgive me for the trick I have played " you; but I could not help it for the " life of me; it fell ſo pat in my way, and " was ſo much to my humour." Then advancing to Mrs. Smyth, ſaid, " I ear- " neſtly beg *your* pardon, my dear ma- " dam; I did not reflect, or I ſhould not

" have

" have played upon your feelings, for
" they are of a ſerious nature I would
" I could make you a reparation. Had
" I had the happineſs ſome inſenſible
" ſcoundrel of my name has enjoyed, I
" ſhould have prized it to the laſt breath
" I drew. I hope that not one Smyth in ten
" thouſand is ſo devoid of taſte and feel-
" ing, as he to whom you were unhap-
" pily too favourable."—" But, ſir,
ſaid Mrs. Smyth, " what does this
" mean? My eyes could not have ſo
" deceived me, as to make me miſtake
" you for the man we talk of. Did
" you not come into this parlour in the
" afternoon that my brother followed
" you to Okeham?"—" I certainly did
" not," replied he, " nor had I ever
" before the honour of ſeeing you."—
" This is very unaccountable," ſaid
Cowper. " Let us call in the landlady,"
ſaid Mr. Smyth, " ſhe may throw ſome

" light upon the matter: perhaps *the*
" Mr. Smyth was in the houſe that day."
The landlady was called in; ſhe ſaid,
" She knew of no other of that name
" being then at the inn; and that the
" Mr. Smyth in company, was the per-
" ſon who went away in the poſt-chaiſe,
" at the time the lady fainted: and ſhe
" could give no clue by which the other
" could be traced."—" But, ſir," ſaid
Mr. Cowper, addreſſing Mr. Smyth,
" how could I be ſo deceived as I was at
" Okeham?"—" As for that," replied
Smyth, " it is very eaſily accounted for:
" you came prepared to be deceived,
" and my fancy was ſo much tickled with
" the images of the deception, that I
" could not let you eſcape. I ſeduced
" the landlord into my ſcheme; I
" blacked my face with cork, that you
" might not diſtinguiſh me if you ſaw
" me, and I let you catch me in the
" operation,

"operation, that it might heighten your "conviction, which I completed by ex- "preſſions Bowater's letter enabled me "to deviſe. To keep up the farce, as "ſoon as you were ſatisfied of my being "your man, I waſhed my face, and came "down to you as my doctor; and the "ſimplicity of your mind, afforded me "an opportunity of giving you a ſopo- "rific, by which I got the ſtart of you "next morning." Here Mr. Smyth, tickled with the recollection of the ſcenes at Okeham, could not help laughing at them, and the remembrance had a ſimilar effect on Mr. Cowper; but the reſt of the company ſeemed more diſguſted than delighted with humour, diſplayed and enjoyed at the expence of a virtuous character, and which awakened and prolonged thoſe painful feelings that Time was wearing out. Aubrey's countenance

was particularly ſerious, and he was about to make ſome obſervations on the general defect of judgment in humouriſts, when Cowper, unwilling to ſpread a gloom on the day, prevented him, by jocularly ſaying, that Smyth the Merry-Andrew, was certainly a more innocent man than Smyth the villain.—"Come, "Aubrey," cried he, "let's be merry, "we have caught a droll fiſh."—"I "own," ſaid Smyth, "I carried the "joke too far, but from the good-na-"ture I ſee in the parties, I hope my re-"pentance will not be unattended with "forgiveneſs." This being ſaid ſeriouſly and feelingly, produced the effect intended; and Mr. Cowper, ſetting the example, Mr. Smyth was received into the good graces of his friends. Mr. Bowater begged to add the Mariton to the Melford travellers, at dinner; and on his

his promiſing to let them off early, that they might reach Warwick before dark, the invitation was accepted.

The certainty of Mrs. Smyth's mind that ſhe had ſeen her huſband, was too poſitive to be diſputed; yet the ſudden vaniſhing of the apparition was as extraordinary as any of the reported illuſions of fancy. It was equally vain to purſue the man as the phantom; and Cowper and the Smyths determined to reſume their former indifference about him. After a pleaſant day ſpent with Mr. Bowater, the party left Leiceſter, having interchanged places in their carriages. Mr. Cowper being in the coach with Aubrey, they conſulted together reſpecting future arrangements; and, as they approached Warwick, the ſubject of Lord Sudley preſented itſelf. "I "know not," ſaid Mr. Cowper, "why "Edmund ſhould not profit by this "man's

" man's death-bed generoſity. He has " no children; his couſins are his neareſt " relations; and theſe deſcending from " a female branch, there is no heir to " the title, which of courſe becomes ex- " tinct. I would not have him diſinhe- " rit them, but I really think that he " who, at the riſk of his own life, ſaved " his, is more entitled to conſideration " than men who are watching anxiouſly " for his death. I ſhall not be ſorry if, " on an explanation with Edmund, he " ſhould leave him a part of his for- " tune." Aubrey agreed that it would be deſirable, provided the gift were not extended to a deviſe of the family-eſtate. As ſoon as the travellers arrived at Warwick, Mr. Cowper went himſelf to Lord Sudley's apothecary, Mr. Spence, to inquire what ſtate his lordſhip was in; and was informed that he could not laſt more than three or four days longer. As

it

it was growing late, Edmund's visit was postponed till the next morning at eleven o'clock, Mr. Cowper being told by Mr. Spence, that that would be the best hour to see his lordship, and that he himself should then attend. In the course of the evening, the conversation turned a great deal on the situation of Lord Sudley, on his character, his fortune, and family; and Mr. Cowper advised Edmund to argue with him on the propriety of suffering his possessions to descend to his heirs, but by no means to reject a bequest. In the morning Edmund rose earlier than the rest of the party, and calling up Arthur, the two friends strolled together over to Burford, where they breakfasted at Lord Sudley's steward's; and, at eleven, Edmund repaired to the Castle. The first thing he did was to enquire for Mr. Spence the apothecary, whose letter to

Arthur

Arthur he acknowledged, and begged to know if his lordſhip would ſee him then. "See you!" ſaid Mr. Spence, "I believe it is the hope of ſeeing you that "has kept him alive for theſe two days "paſt; for I really think him better "ſince he has talked of you than he was "a week ago. I muſt, however, break "the news of your arrival to him; ſo "remain here till I come to you again." Mr. Spence was not long before he returned; and, deſiring Edmund to move gently and to ſpeak low, conducted him to the chamber of the dying nobleman, and then retired.

Lord Sudley had been lifted from his bed and placed upon a couch: he was alone; and, as Edmund approached him, he raiſed his hollow, dim eyes towards him, gave him his hand, and, with a faint voice, deſired him to ſit in the chair which, by his direction, the apothecary

thecary had purpoſely placed near the couch. Edmund obeyed. " I revive " at the ſight of you, my worthy young " friend," continued he, in the ſame feeble voice: " you ſhall help me to " die with more tranquillity than I " thought. Oh! death is dreadful to " me! but I have endeavoured to rob " him of a little of his terror by a will, " in which I have both diſcharged as far " as I could my obligation to you, and " made an atonement for the injury I " once did your virtuous mother, by an " infamous ſlander." Pauſing through feebleneſs, Edmund ſeized the opportunity to undeceive him. " Permit me, " my lord," ſaid he, in a low tone of voice, replete with tenderneſs, " to ſay " a few words before you proceed."— " Do," ſaid he, again putting out his hand, and preſſing Edmund's, " do, my " dear Mr. Aubrey; and, if your ſpeech

" be

" be but as kind as your countenance, it
" will be a cordial to my soul."—" I
" wish, my lord," replied Edmund, " that
" it were in my power to say any thing
" that might produce such a happy ef-
" fect: most happy should I be to say it;
" but I fear I shall rather damp your
" feelings by the awkwardness of my
" communication. Your lordship knows
" me to be the fortunate person who
" was so timely in his visit of your
" grounds; but it is necessary that I
" should inform you that, from my leav-
" ing you to learn my name at your
" steward's, you have supposed me to
" be the friend whom I that day accom-
" panied, and who, being better known
" than I at Burford, was reported to
" your lordship: I am not Arthur Au-
" brey."—" Then, for God's sake!"
cried Lord Sudley, exerting his feeble
voice; " tell me instantly who you are:

" what

"what is your name?"—"My name," replied he, "is Smyth."—"Smyth!" faid Lord Sudley, ftaring at the manly youth, foftening into tears at the fad ftate of the object before him: "Smyth! "and your chriftian name?"—"Ed- "mund."—"How!" exclaimed Lord Sudley, in great agitation; "what was "your father?"—"Alas! my lord, I "never knew a father!"—"Where were "you born?"—"At Oporto." Lord Sudley gazed wildly, and attempted to fpeak; but, before he could utter a word, his eyes clofed, and his head funk back upon his chair.

Edmund, prepared by the account given of Lord Sudley's ftate for his death, conceived he was gone for ever, and ftood contemplating mortality. He raifed the hand that had fallen by his fide, and held it in his, examining the emaciated appearance of premature exhauftion.

hauſtion. "Who," thought he, "that "could behold ſuch a figure as this, "from which the ſoul has been expelled "before its time by debauchery, but "would avoid the courſe, the fatal, cer- "tain courſe, that leads to ſo deplorable "an end!" He ſtill held the hand, and was looking earneſtly at the face, when Lord Sudley, who had only fainted, opened his eyes. Edmund, ſeeing his miſtake, gently replaced on the chair his lordſhip's hand, by which he felt his own ſoftly preſſed, and haſtened to the antichamber for the apothecary, who, returning with him, ſoon revived his patient by applying the uſual ſtimulants. On coming to himſelf, Lord Sudley beckoned Edmund to him, pulled him to his boſom, and cried over him like a child. This emotion Edmund aſcribed to debility and dotage; and he had too much tenderneſs in his heart to inter-

rupt

rupt the gratification of the dying man, whom he ſuffered to fold him in his arms with all the ardour the poor feeble limbs around him could teſtify. For ſome minutes Lord Sudley continued weeping and embracing the paſſive youth, till Mr. Spence deſired he would deſiſt, if he wiſhed not to be ſpeedily exhauſted. He now reſtrained himſelf; and Edmund roſe from his reclining poſture. After gazing at him for a minute: "This," cried Lord Sudley, "muſt be the work of a preſcient "Being." He then deſired Edmund to take his chair again; and, having recruited his ſtrength by a cordial draught, endeavoured to compoſe himſelf, that he might ſpeak with conſiſtency. "You "know not —" He ſtopped; his heart was too full, his mind laboured; he conſidered a minute, and then proceeded thus: "I have bethought me: I will

"act

" act coolly. Tell me, dear boy, have " you any relations near this place ?"— " My lord," said Edmund, " my uncle, " my mother, and sister, are now at " Warwick."—" Merciful God!" cried Lord Sudley, " this is thy work! Mr. " Spence, I beg you will instantly or- " der my coach, and go and entreat " them to come to me immediately; " assure them that their presence is of " the utmost importance to this youth, " and take no denial."—" My lord," said Edmund, " permit me—"—" No; " oh, no! you must not leave me again " while I live!" replied his lordship. Edmund then told him that the Aubreys were with his family, and that Arthur was at his steward's house. " Is it pos- " sible!" cried Lord Sudley, throwing his faint eyes up to Heaven; " well, so " much the better. Mr. Spence, tell " them, I beseech them all to come;

" tell

"tell them to come in mercy to a dying "man!" Edmund ſaid that, if his lordſhip would allow him only to ſtep to Burford while the carriage was getting ready, he would deſire his friend to enforce his requeſt in ſuch a manner as would enſure an immediate compliance; and, on his promiſe to be abſent but a few minutes, Lord Sudley acquieſced. His lordſhip's nurſe being called in, he was left to her care; while the apothecary went to execute the commiſſion given to him.

Edmund told Arthur what had paſſed at Sudley Caſtle, and preſſed him not to let Mrs. Aubrey or his ſiſters ſtay behind; for, as his mother was mentioned in Lord Sudley's will, ſhe ſhould render his laſt hours as eaſy as might be effected by a perſonal forgiveneſs. Arthur promiſed to bring the whole party; and Mr. Spence coming up to the ſteward's door

door in the coach, Arthur went into it; and Edmund returned to Lord Sudley. "Edmund!" ſaid his lordſhip, "come "hither. My boy," continued he, gazing at him, "I have ſomething for you "to do. There is paper in the drawer "of this little table, and here is pen and "ink; write what I dictate." Edmund "took a pen, and wrote the following ſhort note in his lordſhip's words: "Lord Sudley has buſineſs of the utmoſt "importance, which admits of no delay, "and deſires that Mr. Langford will "come to Sudley Caſtle on receiving "this." Having folded it and directed it to John Langford, Eſq. Warwick, the nurſe was ordered to diſpatch it immediately by a man on horſeback. Edmund remained with Lord Sudley, and, imputing his emotions to his enfeebled ſtate, ſubmitted kindly to be gazed at, to be occaſionally embraced and bathed

in

in tears, and to be examined on the events of his life, his education, and his principles. Meanwhile, Arthur and Mr. Spence arrived at the inn at Warwick, and, though Mrs. Aubrey at first objected, soon prevailed upon the whole party to go to Sudley Castle. On their arrival, they were shown into the magnificent library formerly described, which had a communication, by means of a private staircase, with the suite of apartments occupied by Lord Sudley. Mr. Spence, who returned with the company, went alone to his lordship, to announce with caution the success of his commission. On hearing it; "Spence," said he, "I have a very se-"vere trial to go through; give me "something to assist me in supporting it." Having taken a cordial, he said that he felt as if he were equal to it: "but," added he, "attend to my directions. I

" can only admit the party gradually;
" and, perhaps, I shall not be able to see
" them all. I wish to see Mr. and Mrs.
" Aubrey first." Mr. Spence went for them; and, while he was gone, Edmund placed chairs near the couch to receive them. " How good is this!" said Lord Sudley, as Mr. and Mrs. Aubrey advanced towards him, " to consent to re-
" lieve in some degree the heavy, the
" very heavy burden that is weighing
" me down."—" My lord," said Aubrey, " you will render it light by de-
" voting your soul to that unfeigned re-
" pentance which we have learned from
" the best authority is so valued in Hea-
" ven."—" Alas!" replied Lord Sudley, " there can be but little hope in a
" death-bed repentance; yet what hope
" there may be must arise from actions,
" not from vain, timid cries, addressed
" to the Almighty. I have more hope in

" the

" the juſtice which God, in his goodneſs,
" has called upon me to do before I die,
" than in all the prayers a guilty con-
" ſcience can dictate. In the outſet of
" my life, I infamouſly wronged that
" lovely, virtuous woman, the diſtreſſes
" of whoſe family have lately reached
" my ear: if putting them above diſtreſs
" be any atonement, oh! accept and
" forgive me!"—" I do forgive you, my
" lord," ſaid Mrs. Aubrey, ſo affected
that the tears ran down her cheeks; " I
" forgive you from the bottom of my
" heart."—" Thank you! thank you!"
ſaid Lord Sudley: " O! that I could as
" eaſily obtain the forgiveneſs of all;
" but reparation is out of my power.
" Among others, that poor, weak wo-
" man, who calls herſelf Lady Sudley;
" alas! juſtice compels me to degrade
" her in the ſight of the world: Aubrey,
" ſhe is not legally my wife; but I de-

" lay too long an act which I was willing " you ſhould witneſs. Pray, Mr. Spence, " requeſt the favour of Mr. Cowper to " come in." While Mr. Spence was gone for him, Lord Sudley, pointing to Edmund, ſaid to the Aubreys: " you " know who this youth is; that I am " indebted to him for ſaving my life; " can I do better than beſtow my for- " tune on him?"—" My lord," ſaid Aubrey, " he is worthy of your gene- " roſity; but he thinks, with all his " friends, that your lordſhip's heir —" —" Should inherit the bulk of my for- " tune," ſaid Lord Sudley, interrupting Aubrey: " it is a juſt opinion, and ſhall " have its full weight upon my conduct " at this awful criſis."

Here the nurſe coming in from the anti-chamber, told his lordſhip that Mr. Langford was at the door; and was bid to ſend him in immediately. Mr. Lang-

ford

ford entered on his tip-toes, and ſilently took a chair by Aubrey. He was hardly ſeated, when Mr. Spence introduced Mr. Cowper, who, advancing towards Lord Sudley, ſaid, "At your requeſt, "my lord, though with much pain —" he ſtopped, looked ſtedfaſtly at Lord Sudley, then ſhrunk back as if gazing at a phantom. Lord Sudley, fixing his eyes on Mr. Cowper, ſaid deliberately, in a faint, but hollow voice: "This is "no time for reſentment; I am going "to my laſt account, and juſtice will be "done; but, while I yet live, tell this "noble youth, as he might well doubt "from me what I hardly believe myſelf, "who I am." This addreſs, and Mr. Cowper's extreme ſurpriſe, excited the utmoſt aſtoniſhment in the Aubreys and Edmund. "I am not miſtaken, then?" ſaid Mr. Cowper; "you tell me that "my eyes do not deceive me."—"It

" was a healthy face that deceived you, " Cowper," replied Lord Sudley; " my " hollow cheeks and dying eyes tell you " truth."—" Great God!" cried Cowper, " how inſcrutable thy providence! " but in all things thou wilt appear, " here or hereafter, omniſcient, juſt, and " good. Oh! be merciful to this un- " happy, repentant creature, and forgive " him all his ſins!" He then took Edmund by the hand, and, placing it in Lord Sudley's, ſaid, " Take him, my " lord; I preſent you a ſon worthy a " throne." The aſtoniſhed youth knelt to embrace his father; who, gently preſſing him to his heart, ſaid, " Yes, " you are my ſon, *I* glory to acknow- " ledge *you*; but I am afraid *you* will " never be brought to believe that you " are the ſon of a man who could deſert " you and your mother; of that villain " Smyth, who, after betraying and ruin-

" ing

" ing your pure, unſuſpicious uncle, left " you on his hands in a foreign land, " without the means of ſupport. But, " if you *do* acknowledge me, I know " you will forgive me; for you have " learned of him how to forbear and " how to forgive."—" Oh, my lord! " my lord!" cried Edmund.—" My " lord!" replied Lord Sudley; " and " will you not give me a tenderer title?" —" Oh, yes; my father," cried Edmund, whoſe tears flowed doubly at the omiſſion, natural as it was: " I beſeech " you not to reproach yourſelf; for " your preſent ſentiments more than " compenſate all that is paſt." Here Mr. Spence interpoſed, and begged Lord Sudley to reſt for ſome time: then turning to Mr. Cowper, aſſured him that it was of the utmoſt conſequence to the ſettlement of his affairs, that his lordſhip ſhould exert himſelf no more at preſent.

" I am ſenſible that Mr. Spence is right," ſaid Lord Sudley; " it will be better " that I ſhould be left for a little while; " I feel myſelf again exhauſted. Go, " Edmund, and plead with your mother " and your ſiſter to forgive and ſee me. " Do you, Cowper, tell them you have " prayed for me; your example will " have a good effect: So will Mrs. Au- " brey's; and do, my dear madam, tell " Lady Sudley that I would have ſeen " her firſt; but that, when I reflected, " I thought the diſcovery would be bet- " ter made by her brother. Aubrey, I " ſhall want to talk with you by and by; " you will not, I hope, leave Sudley " Caſtle at preſent." Aubrey ſaid that he would not; and, after giving his hand to Lord Sudley, who held out his to him, led Mrs. Aubrey out, followed by Edmund. " Cowper," ſaid Lord Sudley, as he was about to follow, " all

" things

" things will be eaſily explained: Mr. " Langford, that gentleman, is my agent, " and was the perſon who obtained my " remittances in the name of Smyth, " and forwarded them to Oporto, though " till this morning he never heard any " thing of my marriage with your ſiſter; " but ſhe, no doubt, has the certificate, " and I now acknowledge her before " him as Lady Sudley." Mr. Cowper, preſenting him his hand, and ſaying that his preſent conduct made all the amends he could wiſh, left the room: but Mr. Langford ſtaid a few minutes longer to receive ſome inſtructions from his lordſhip.

How the relation of this extraordinary event was received in the library, will be readily conceived. Wonder, with confuſed emotions of ſorrow and joy, pervaded the friendly circle. Edmund's mother, who had been long reſigned to

the will of Providence, and whoſe reſignation had not been diſturbed, though her nerves had been agitated by the ſight of her huſband at Leiceſter, yielded, when her ſurpriſe abated, to thoſe feelings which, in ſpite of her injuries, were inſpired by the account of Lord Sudley's ſufferings and conduct; and ſhe bleſſed God that his diſſolution had been ſufficiently protracted to allow the view of death to awaken in his mind a ſenſe of his eternal danger. When ſhe was told that he had acknowledged her before his agent as Lady Sudley, the gratification ſhe expreſſed turned entirely on the proſpect it opened for her children. The affecting ſcene that had paſſed, and the ſolemn event about to take place in the Caſtle, reſtrained all pleaſurable feelings among the young folks, who ſpoke more by looks than by words.

After

After resting about two hours on his bed, Lord Sudley was again lifted to the couch, and an interview took place between him and Lady Sudley, whose forgiveness, in consideration of his awful state and repentance, was bestowed as soon as it was asked. Edmund presented his sister, of whose birth Lord Sudley had never heard till she was mentioned by her brother. She bore a stronger resemblance to his family even than Edmund, and he wept over her as he had done over him. Mr. Spence, who still attended, would not suffer such scenes to be prolonged; and Lord Sudley desired Edmund and Harriet to go and stay with Arthur and his sisters, and request Mr. Cowper, Aubrey, and Mrs. Aubrey, to come to his chamber. In the mean time, Lord Sudley listened to the affecting consolations of Lady Sudley, who was speaking when her brother

and the Aubreys entered. "Cowper," said Lord Sudley, as soon as they were seated, "in a worldly point of view, "what have I not lost by my desertion "of this angelic woman! but, alas! "even that, great as it is, is small in "comparison with the loss of my soul. "Oh, death! death! how dreadful art "thou to the wicked man! *The sting of* "*death is sin!* and where, Aubrey, "where is the kind hand that can extract "it on the bed of death?" Before Aubrey expressed his sentiment on this question, he thought it proper to inquire into the nature and progress of Lord Sudley's repentance. His lordship frankly owned that he never had had any opinion of the doctrines of religion till the view of death brought him to reflect on a future state; that, all hope in this life failing, he had by degrees wrought himself into a conviction of the

truths of revealed religion, which he ſaid he found more ſtrongly ſupported by reaſon than he had ever thought poſſible, and even more than natural religion, to which there was an objection no ſtrength of reaſon could ſurmount, ariſing from the mixture of evil in the work of a benevolent power; an objection that had been removed by the light of the goſpel, which, with all its difficulties, had furniſhed the only clue for conducting the underſtanding through the mazes in which it was entangled in the ſtudy of the nature of man; that, on this conviction, he had become a Chriſtian, and had taken the ſacrament: that he had endeavoured to atone for his ſins, but that in general, from the nature of his crimes, reparation was out of his power; though God had manifeſted his goodneſs by unexpectedly bringing in his way thoſe whom he had moſt injured. "Did you

"not

" not know, my lord," ſaid Cowper, " that I lived at Melford?"—" On " the contrary," replied Lord Sudley, " I was certain you had left it; I " knew of your diſtreſs in town, and " conceived that you had abandoned " England altogether with your ſiſter: " and, as for Edmund, I did not even " recollect his exiſtence."—" Permit " me, my Lord," ſaid Cowper, " to aſk " if you did not once ſee Lady Sudley " at an inn at Leiceſter?"—" Never," replied he. " It is very ſtrange," ſaid Lady Sudley, " I certainly ſaw you, my " Lord. Were you not at an inn " when——"—" I now remember it " well;" ſaid he, " You muſt have been " the lady into whoſe parlour I obtrud- " ed; by the beſt hope I can form, I " ſwear I did not know you; and I left " the room in conſequence of finding my " error by your confuſion. I paſſed a

" chaiſe

" chaiſe that was at the door, and got
" into my own carriage, which ſtood in
" the ſtreet. I had long given up every
" idea of your being in England. Since
" I have been aware of the dangerous
" ſtate I am in, I have thought of you
" day after day with the moſt terrible
" forebodings of puniſhment on your
" account; and oh! what would I not
" have given a week ago to have fore-
" ſeen this meeting!"—" I am now
" ſatisfied, my Lord," ſaid Lady Sudley,
" that you did not know me; pray com-
" poſe yourſelf, and be aſſured that the
" goodneſs of God will not end here."
—" Oh! you are an angel," cried he,
" I wiſh I could think that it could be
" extended to ſo uncertain a repentance
" as mine. Of what value can that re-
" pentance be that begins in fear?"—
" My Lord," ſaid Aubrey, " after what
" you have ſaid, and the conduct I have

" this

" this day witneſſed, I have no doubt " that your mind is truly renewed; and, " though a change of life and heart, on " which the promiſes of the goſpel de- " pend, cannot be ſuddenly aſcertained " by man, yet ſo great is the mercy of " the Almighty, uniting with his omni- " ſcience, that I ſcruple not to pronounce " my opinion to be full of hope."—" In- " deed, my dear friends," ſaid Lord Sudley, with a deep ſigh, " I am ſure " my mind is entirely turned and re- " renewed; and, though I was firſt " rouſed by horror, my reflexion is now " grown up into a ſettled faith and con- " verſion."* " Then, my Lord," ſaid Aubrey,

* Theſe words were Rocheſter's to Biſhop Burnet. I wiſh I had room to interweave, in the concluſion of this novel, the death-bed repentance of that witty debauchee; but this volume being already ſwelled much beyond the common bulk, I ſhall content myſelf with referring my readers to it in

Aubrey, " be assured that *Death is swal-* " *lowed up in victory.*" Aubrey, with the assistance of Cowper and Lady Sudley, continued some time pouring into his ulcered heart the balm of religious consolation, till he was warned by the return of his pains, which began to attack him at a certain time of the day, to be removed to his bed, and to take his opiates. They then left him, with a promise to continue at Sudley-Castle all night; and Lady Sudley said she should return to assume her privilege of attending him as a nurse.

It being known that the party were to remain at the Castle, dinner was served in the eating-room of his Lordship's apartments, and beds were prepared on the other side of the house. The ser-

in the Bishop's account, under the title of *Some Passages of the Life and Death of John, Earl of Rochester*; a book strongly recommended by Dr. Johnson.

vants,

vants, having learned the diſcovery of Edmund's title, were extremely aſſiduous in their attentions to him and their lady, who were modeſtly ſolicited to direct what was their pleaſure. The converſation of the party ran on the occurrences unfolded by the event of the morning; and the reſt of the day was tinctured with wonder and gloom. They retired early to their reſpective chambers, and Lady Sudley ſpent the night watching by her dying Lord. The next morning, with the aſſiſtance of Mr. Spence, who returned to the Caſtle about ten o'clock, he was again able to ſit up, and to talk with his comforters. His heavy eyes dwelt on Edmund and Harriet by turns, and he frequently ejaculated; "To part with them juſt as I have "found them!" In the courſe of the forenoon he ſaid to Mr. Cowper, that there was a circumſtance which hitherto,

among

among weightier concerns, had eſcaped his memory: "You know too well," ſaid he, "the irreparable injury I did "you by my proceedings at Oporto; "but you have no idea of what chiefly "inſtigated me to that diabolical con- "duct: you do not know that it was "becauſe you interrupted me in one of "my early purſuits of vice. Do you "remember the battle you fought in a "field leading to Melford?"—"Too "well," ſaid Mr. Cowper. "I was your "antagoniſt," continued Lord Sudley. "I recollected you at Oporto, and at "the ſame time perceived that I was "not recognized. Enraged at being "robbed of a prize diſcovered for me "by one of my people, I reſolved to be "revenged upon you. I had previouſly "planned your ſiſter's ruin; but, finding "that not practicable, I indulged my "horrid paſſion by completing yours.

"Oh!

"Oh dreadful, dreadful! and the man I "ruined forgives me! There, there, Au- "brey, is the triumph of chriſtianity." Upon this, he continued for ſome time commenting on the excellency of the precepts of the goſpel, particularly thoſe of forgiveneſs and the love of one's enemies; precepts which, while they ſeemed unnatural in the heterogenous compound of the human heart, were, on reflexion, celeſtial in their nature. He could not, however, ſpeak long at once; and he was now earlier exhauſted than he had been the day before. After he was in bed, Mr. Langford brought him his will, altered according to the inſtructions he had received; and it was regularly executed in preſence of Mr. Langford, Mr. Spence, and his Lordſhip's ſteward. He then took it into his own hand, and gave it to Lady Sudley, who depoſited it in his table drawer. He

ſoon

ſoon after took his opiates, and fell into a ſleep: he woke in the courſe of the night, and ſpoke once or twice to Lady Sudley; and once ſhe heard him praying devoutly. About two in the morning he died, without any convulſion, or even a groan.

Lord Sudley's life had excited abhorrence; but his death raiſed compaſſion. It cannot, however, be imagined that the ſorrow it created was either deep or durable in hearts unguided by any previous attachment. It was deepeſt with Edmund, now Lord Sudley; for both the life and death of his father left a ſerious impreſſion on his mind, and, combining with the wonderful change of his own lot, produced a thoughtfulneſs which yielded only to time. Edmund's affairs being now of the firſt importance to Mr. Cowper, he ſent an expreſs to Melford with letters to Mr. Grey and Cowſel,

Cowsel, informing them of the event that had taken place, and requesting their attention to his affairs at Edenbower till he returned: nor could the Aubreys refuse the solicitation of the young Lord Sudley and his mother, to continue for the present at Sudley Castle. The day after Lord Sudley's death his will was read by Mr. Langford before the whole party, including Mr. Spence and the servants. It was not long: it briefly acknowledged Edmund as his heir, leaving him all his fortune, after the payment of the following bequests: to Harriet, thirty thousand pounds; to Mrs. Aubrey, an annuity of three hundred pounds for her life; to Mr. Cowper, two thousand pounds, besides small legacies to his servants. To Lady Sudley, he appointed three thousand pounds a year for her jointure, and bequeathed her his coach and four, and three thousand pounds for the pur-

purchaſe of plate and houſehold goods. Previous to the funeral, Arthur wrote an account of all that had happened to his friend Senſitive, not forgetting to mention the bequeſts of the late Lord Sudley's will; and at the ſame time telling him that he ſhould ſoon be in town to profit by Mr. Hamline's friendſhip in his voyage to St. Kitt's. The funeral was deferred for a week; and Mr. Langford, at the requeſt of Edmund, wrote letters before it took place to his relations. The interment was conducted with a ſuitable magnificence; and, when it was over, Edmund was congratulated by his friends on his acceſſion to his title and fortune. "You, my dear uncle," ſaid Edmund, "who taught me to con-" quer adverſity, muſt teach me to bear "proſperity."—"I know one," ſaid Mr. Cowper, looking at Emily, "who "will be a more agreeable inſtructor."

Emily

Emily coloured. " When Miſs Aubrey " undertakes the taſk," continued he, " I am confident you will be an apt " ſcholar."—" Sir," ſaid Emily, " the " ſituation of things is very much al- " tered ſince we left Mariton. I have " a very ſincere regard for your nephew, " but I hope you will not take it amiſs " that I beg Lord Sudley to conſider all " that paſſed between him and me there " as if it had never occurred."—" Hea- " vens! Miſs Aubrey!" cried Lord Sudley, " what can you mean? I would " rather reſign the remembrance of " every occurrence here, and wake, as " from a dream of ſplendour, than con- " ſent that a word or a look that you " beſtowed upon me at Mariton ſhould " be torn from my memory. What " will proſperity be to me if you and " Arthur do not agree to ſhare it with " me?"—" To the mind you now poſ-

" ſeſs

" ſeſs I ſtill adhere," replied Emily, " but, as I never entered into any en- " gagements with Lord Sudley, it would " be unjuſt to hold him bound by any " that he made before he knew himſelf. " If, ſix months hence, I find him Ed- " mund, I will have no objection, in " ſpite of my want of fortune, to renew " my engagement; but till then I de- " clare Lord Sudley as free as if he had " never entered into any." Aubrey, taking Lord Sudley by the hand, declared his approbation of Emily's delicacy, " for," ſaid he, " it is not over- " ſtrained. I am confident ſhe believes " your heart invariable, Edmund; and " your choice ſhould be that of Lord " Sudley's." Mr. Cowper concurring; " Then," cried Edmund, " as Lord " Sudley, I vow my heart to be as con- " ſtant to her as ever it could have been " as Edmund's: but ſhe is all that ſhe " ought to be. And now, my dear

" Arthur," continued he, " make me " happy by dropping all thoughts of the " Weſt Indies. I know my ſiſter loves " you——" Poor Harriet was thunder-ſtruck; her blood flew to her face, and her eyes were caſt to the ground— " Why," proceeded he, " ſhould we " trifle with happineſs? why not ſpeak " plainly in this circle of friends ſo dear " to one another? Harriet's fortune is " thirty thouſand pounds; to be equal " with her accept thirty thouſand more " from me, and let us determine all to " be happy."

Here Lord Sudley was interrupted by one of his ſervants, who told him that a gentleman at the gate had got off his horſe, and was coming in. " Did he " tell you his name?" ſaid Lord Sudley. " No, my Lord," ſaid the ſervant, " I " was not near him, but I ſaw him alight, " and walk through the yard."—" Per-" haps," ſaid Mr. Cowper, " your diſ-

" appointed

"appointed relation, to ascertain your "title."—"At all events, show him in," said Lord Sudley. He had scarcely spoken when the door opened, and Charles Sensitive, with his placid smile and gentle air, came forward, and going up to Lord Sudley, took him by the hand and said; "My Lord, I have not "time to congratulate you, but come "join with me and congratulate our "friend Aubrey. Aubrey," continued he, putting a large parchment into his hand, "here, take it, my dear friend, "and God bless you with it; Aubrey-"Hall is your own again."—"More "wonders!" cried Arthur. The astonished party gazed at Aubrey as he rapidly cast his eye here and there over the writing. "My uncle's will!" cried "he, what can this mean?"—"I'll tell "you," said Sensitive, "and save you "some time: Your cousin, Mr. Arthur "Aubrey, and your old honest solicitor,

" Mr. Lamb, are two rascals. Lamb,
" bribed highly by your cousin to de-
" stroy this will, swore to him he did,
" but kept it as the seconder of occa-
" sional motions for supplies from the
" pockets of the villain. They lately
" quarrelled, and Lamb, before a friend
" of mine, threw out a threat that im-
" plied the existence of such an instru-
" ment. On hearing it, I determined
" without loss of time to make an
" attempt to recover it. I went to
" Chelmsford, and took him unawares.
" I told him that his villainy was dis-
" covered by a person who had heard
" him and his confederate quarrelling;
" and that it was in his power to save
" his own life by depositing the will im-
" mediately in my hand. The colour
" had forsaken his cheek the moment I
" mentioned a discovery, but he was not
" so easily tricked; and while his teeth
" chattered with sudden terror, he asked
" what

" what I meant by such a charge. Still " he was civil, said he was taken ill, " begged I would excuse him a few " minutes, and went out leaving me in " his office. Casting my eyes on two " tin boxes on which the name of Au- " brey was painted in large letters, I " seized them without hesitation, and ran " off with them as fast as I could to a " friend's house. I had not patience to " wait; in presence of my friend I broke " open the boxes, and, to my unspeaka- " ble joy found the will that made you " heir to Aubrey-Hall regularly exe- " cuted. There it is, and God Almighty " bless you with it."

It is unnecessary to dwell upon the feelings and expressions that were the result of this conduct of Sensitive's; Aubrey, Cowper, the whole party in short were in raptures with him. Mr. Cowper with great delight told him that he had saved him three thousand pounds more

more than he had allowed himself to hope, so that he would have a large surplus, amounting to at least nine thousand pounds. "Nine thousand pounds!" cried Aubrey, looking at Arthurina, "I "hope he will find a wife with more "than double that sum." Sensitive understood him, and pressed his hand. Sudley-Castle, in spite of the melancholy air cast over it by the mourning occasioned by the late awful event, assumed a spirit of joy which the good sense of those who felt it manifested with that decency and delicacy counterfeelings required. In the autumn Lord Sudley led Emily to the altar, and at the same time Harriet gave her hand to Arthur. Sensitive and Arthurina made a third couple; and Aubrey promised Arthur-William that in one year more he should look for a mistress among the muses at Cambridge.

THE END.

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